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MEMOIRS

OF

The Life

OF

STEPHEN CRISP,

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HIS WORKS.

BY SAMUEL TUKE.

"Religion next to her own light and energy on the minds of men, has not a more popular argument in her favour than the patience and constancy of her afflicted confessors."

Besse.

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INTRODUCTION.

When I undertook to make a selection from the Works of Stephen Crisp, it was my intention to prefix to it a Biographical Notice, drawn from the Journal which he has left of his own life, and from some other documents, in a similar manner to those Notices of members of the Society of Friends, which have been already presented to the public by my late revered Father. But on making the attempt, I found that there was little in the Journal which could with propriety be omited; and that it was so excellent as a whole, and so characteristic of the simplicity, piety and talent of the Author, that it could not, with justice to him or to the reader, be curtailed or combined with any thing of my own.

It is not unusual with those who write Memoirs of themselves, to dwell with too much particularity on those events in their history which are of little interest to others; and the editors of such productions have more fre-

quently to exercise a friendly discretion in the omission, than in the addition of circumstances. But the sketch which Stephen Crisp has left of his long and laborious life, is chiefly the history of his religious course—of the means by which he was led to the knowledge of what he believed to be Truth—and of the labours in which he was engaged for its promotion. He has not told us the name of his parents—the period of his birth—the manner of his education, or given us any particulars of his family. Nor has he mentioned more than two of the occasions, on which he underwent imprisonment or other sufferings, for his steadfast adherence to the principles which he had embraced, and which he so zealously advocated. There is here an indication of that true greatness of mind, which distinguishes the Christian hero. He is engaged in a great and arduous conflict; and he forgets, in the importance and glory of his enterprise, the little incidents which affect chiefly his own ease or distinction.

In supplying, through this Introduction, a few of the particulars which he has omitted, I purpose to notice very briefly some of the principal incidents of his life, and to indulge in a few observations on his character and

writings, which have been suggested in the course of the pleasant task, which I have been induced to undertake.

Stephen Crisp was born at Colchester, in the year 1628; where, by the incidental mention of his parents, at page 53 of his Journal, it appears they were living in the year 1659. From the date of his wife's death, and the number of years which he mentions they had lived together, it is inferred that he married in the year 1648, at the age of 20. It does not appear from his Journal, or any other source, whether he was brought up to or followed any business or profession. But from the time which he appears to have had in his youth for religious pursuits, and the almost entire devotion of his time to these objects, after he became a Minister of the Gospel, I am inclined to think that he had not any secular engagements.

The very feeling account which he has given of his own childhood, affords a striking instance of early religious impressions, not of a temporary kind, but exercising from year to year a strong influence on his conduct. The course of his reflections at a very early pe-

riod of life, bespeaks an unusual developement of mind; and, when only from *ten* to *twelve* years of age, he appears to have entered with earnestness, into the religious discussions of the day. and he says, he went with "as much diligence and cheerfulness to the reading and hearing of sermons, as other children went to their play and sportings."

It is not certain in what religious profession he was educated; but I incline to think, from his having mentioned that he found out the meetings of the Separatists when he was *seventeen*, and from some other passages in his Journal, that he was brought up in the profession of the established Church.

As he approached to manhood, the love of pleasure appears to have obtained a temporary and partial ascendancy over his mind; but, during a considerable portion of this period, he seems to have devoted himself zealously to the improvement of his understanding, by reading, and by the observation of men and things. For a time, however, he says, that he took pleasure in the company of the wicked, and, in many things, became like

them; but, during this time, the Spirit of Christ struggled within him, which preserved him from many of the gross evils in which his companions indulged. And, after two or three years continuance in this state, he was brought deeply to mourn that slavery and captivity of sin, under which he laboured; and was made willing to do any thing which would enable him to overcome evil.

Under these feelings, he appears to have joined the Baptists; and though, for a short time, he was again drawn into evil company, he soon returned to his religious pursuits; and I apprehend it was at this time that he became a teacher of a separate congregation, as noticed in the testimony respecting him of Colchester Monthly Meeting. He still found that he wanted a power which was not to be obtained by the compliance with any outward forms, or by the mere performance of religious rites.

There is a lively description of his state at this time, in a Sermon delivered by him in the year 1688:—

"I had fasted and prayed in my younger years, and spent time in hearing, reading, and meditation, and did all in my own power to mend my state, but I could not mend it; and as I grew up in years, sin and corruption more prevailed, and I came so far as to believe that there was no help, and that if God did not help me, I was undone to all eternity. I many times wished that I had never been born; I went to ministers and meetings, and to all sorts of separate people, and to all manner of ordinances, and to all kinds of means, to mend this bad heart of mine; to see if I could obtain a power that would get me victory over my corruptions; but my arm was never so long as to reach thereunto. It was far out of my power and reach."—*See page* 426.

He was under these impressions when James Parnel visited Colchester in 1655. Stephen Crisp was then twenty seven years of age. Of the effect of this young man's preaching upon him, and of the influence of the principles he was then led to imbibe, with the various and deep conflicts into which his mind was introduced, his own Journal furnishes a very striking and affecting relation.

I insert among the Letters at the close of this introduction, one, of which the original is at Colchester, from James Parnel to his convert.

It is a remarkable circumstance which I may be allowed here to mention, that the Society in the counties of Cambridge, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, was first raised and became very numerous, principally through the labours of three instruments, James Parnel, William Caton, and George Whitehead, neither of whom had attained the age of twenty years.

Despised and persecuted as were the people who held the principles which Stephen Crisp had now embraced, he appears not to have hesitated in his choice of them, as soon as he believed them to be consistent with truth, and calculated to promote his progress in righteousness. And from this period to that of his death, the steadfastness of his character was remarkable; and no doubt appears to have arisen in his mind as to the correctness of theprinciples of the Society of Friends, to which he had then attached himself.

For a few years, he appears to have been diligently engaged in the affairs of the Society, in and about his native place; but, though much occupied in private ministrations both spiritual and temporal, it does not appear that he acted in the capacity of a public Minister of the Gospel until the year 1659, about four years after his convincement. At this period he believed it his duty to visit Scotland, to bear witness, as he says, "to the Name of the Lord to that high professing nation."

From this commencement of his public labours, he was engaged, with but little intermission, in the great work to which he had been called; and he was soon not behind the chief labourers of that active day, in endeavouring to spread the knowledge of Christ, and of that redemption from the power of sin in this life, which is alone to be attained by an experimental acquaintance with his Spirit.

He was eminently useful in strengthening and confirming the infant Society. He appears to have visited the meetings of Friends in every part of the nation; and the interest

which he took in the welfare of each particular part—the discernment and judgment with which he was favoured—and the spirit of meekness and Christian charity which accompanied his zeal, led him to be very highly esteemed, and looked upon as a Father in the Church. His Epistles, some of which are addressed to particular places or districts, and others to Friends in general, a very small part indeed of which have been printed, strikingly exhibit him in this pastoral character; and there was perhaps, with the exception of George Fox, no individual who had upon him a greater share of the weight and charge of the the New Society than Stephen Crisp.*

The cause in which he had embarked, and the course of his labours, exposed him to considerable sufferings. Joseph Besse mentions him, amongst many others, as being imprisoned in Essex, between the years 1656 and 1659. In the course of his journey into Scotland, whilst engaged in prayer in the meeting at York, he was violently pulled down, and haled out into the street by the Mayor of the city.

* See the Letters, page 6 to 21.

It appears from his Description of the Church of Scotland, "that he received many gross insults during the course of his public ministrations in that country; and he particularly mentions the behaviour of the people of Dalkeith, where, he says, "had not the soldiers appeared as a stop to their murderous purposes against him, their works of mischief had more appeared."

In this year 1659 persecution against the Society ran very high, and the treatment of those who were imprisoned was so cruel, that many died in consequence of it. A remarkable instance of Christian feeling was afforded on this occasion, by the brethren who were at large. A paper was addressed to the Parliament, signed by 169 Friends, of whom Stephen Crisp was one, imploring that they might be allowed to take the places of their friends, in the filthy holes and dungeons where they were perishing!

In the following year, on a visit to Friends in the North of England, he was imprisoned in the County of Durham, in consequence of being at a meeting at Norton, and, on the well known ground of a scruple against oaths, refusing to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy; and in the same year he appears, with

many others, to have been very inhumanly treated at Cambridge, by a mob of students and others, who attacked them whilst meeting in their own hired house for the purpose of worship. On this occasion an address was presented to King Charles II. signed by 29 of the chief sufferers, among whom is to be observed the name of Stephen Crisp.*

* The following extract from this document may serve to show the spirit of the times: and may also serve to stimulate our gratitude for the privileges which the Society has now long enjoyed, under the government and legislature of this country, and for the altered tone of feeling towards the Society, which prevades the public mind.

"On the second day of the 5th month, as we were gathering together to a general Meeting, at the usual place there being our own hired house, a tumult of scholars, lewd women, townsmen, and boys, gathered also about the meeting-place; not content with the former injuries, insolencies, and indignities, acted and expressed toward the Lamb's followers, about a month before, neither ashamed nor afraid to do the same things again, though the Heads and Governors both of Town and University were made acquainted with the former riot, but rather encouraged, in that their deserved punishment was delayed. Some of them, prepared with excess of drink, that they might forget all humanity, and shew no mercy, suffered none to pass them without some abuse or other; stopping and thrusting us to and fro, throwing some down, or throwing dirt or filth upon their clothes, or in their faces; and also beating some back again, and not suffering them to go into the Meeting, mingling much scoffing, reviling, and threatening, with the rest of their mis-usages; and not ceasing there,

In the year 1661, Stephen Crisp was taken from a meeting which he was attending in a private house at Harwich, and committed to prison, the Justice writing his mittimus before he had taken his examination. In the following year the Mayor of Colchester broke up a meeting at which Stephen Crisp was present, and committed him to prison. In 1663 he was again imprisoned at Colchester, during which he wrote two letters to the Mayor

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fell upon us in our peaceable meeting, as we were waiting upon the Lord in fear, striking at those they could reach, flinging at others, and making an hideous noise, with scoffing, laughing, railing, shouting, knocking, drumming upon the boards, and sometimes throwing wildfire and gunpowder into the meeting, to drown the sound of that which was spoken to us in the name of the Lord; and continually exercising themselves in one act of mischief or other, to make a disturbance, and weary us out of the place. And when they saw they could not do it by all those means, they brake and battered down the doors and walls next the street, with bolt hammers and other engines; and though we reminded them of the King's declaration, wherein he promised liberty to tender consciences, at his first coming into England, and shewed them the unlawfulness of their doings, assaulting, breaking in upon us, and beating us in our own hired house, they called us rebels, and pretended the King's order for what they did; and ran violently upon us, and used us as if our lives were all at their mercies, haling, thrusting us out, and striking both men and women, (though not lifting up a hand against them,)

of that town, from which extracts will be found in this volume; and as it appears that, at the time of the letter which is placed first in the collection of his works, he had been forty-eight weeks in confinement, and the latter is evidently addressed to a new Mayor, there is little doubt that this imprisonment was for more than a year. In the year 1668 he was imprisoned at Ipswich; the occasion or duration I cannot ascertain. One of his most

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without any pity or respect to age or other condition, with clubs, great splinters, and pieces of the doors, and other timber. And though they that entered the house beat us with so much cruelty, yet would not their Outguard let us pass, till they also had satisfied their bloody minds in beating us again, so that very many of us were sorely hurt and bruised. Twenty-two had their blood shed: and one so lamed that he was left behind, unable to walk abroad; and a woman almost killed by their cruel usage. And besides this, some of us lost our hats, and many of us had our clothes rent, and much bespattered and bedaubed; and yet our persecutors were not satisfied with all this. When they had driven us from the house, and cleared the streets of us, they returned and quite battered down the rest of the walls and bays on each side of the meeting-house, next two entries, and laid it all open to the streets; then sought and hunted up and down the meeting-house again for us; and them they lighted on did very much abuse; and assaulted an Alderman's house where some of us lodged, and beat the man of the house at his own door, and departed not so long as it was light." *Besse vol.* i. *p.* 86.

valuable Tracts the "Plain Pathway Opened," is dated from the County Gaol at that place. In 1670 he was taken at a meeting at Horsley-down,* in London, and fined 20*l.* which was most probably obtained by distraint, as it does not appear that he went to prison on the occasion.

In the early periods of the Society, there was a considerable number of persons who had embraced its principles, in the United Provinces, and in some parts of Germany. William Ames, William Caton and John Higgins had been chiefly instrumental in *planting* the Society there; but the *watering* of it devolved for many years upon Stephen Crisp. And he was eminently instrumental in confirming and increasing the Society in those parts, during the severe persecutions which attended its professors in almost every place.§

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* The Meeting-house at this place was shortly after pulled down by order of the King [Charles II.] in Council!!

§ Meetings appear to have been established at Dantzick, Embden, Hamburgh, Cresheim near Worms, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Gonda, Hoorne, Leyden, Alckmaer, &c.

He visited the Low Countries, first in the year 1663; a second time in 1697, when, in company with Josiah Coale, he says, they spent about three months in visiting the Churches. It is probable that, during this journey, he was at most if not all the places on the Continent where Friends were settled. During each of the years from 1669 to 1674 inclusive, he spent a considerable time in visiting various parts of the United Provinces, and some places in Germany, where a considerable number of persons were suffering persecution for their adherence to the principles of Friends. In his visit in 1669, he was able to speak freely in public, in the Low Dutch language. He was engaged in the establishment of Meetings for Discipline; and he observes, that he found at that time the care of the Churches in those parts particularly laid upon him. From the period of his first visit in 1663, to the last in 1685, he visited the United Provinces thirteen or fourteen times. And in the interval of those visits he kept up, by writing, a frequent correspondence with the Friends in those parts, much to their satisfaction and edification; as appears by letters from William Caton and others,

addressed to Stephen Crisp, the originals of some of which are yet preserved.

It is worthy of observation, that, though he repeatedly visited the places where persecution was the hottest; had intercourse with those who were in prison; and expostulated boldly,* in person and by letters, with Magistrates and other persons in authority; he does not appear to have received any personal injury, or to have been imprisoned, in the course of his foreign labours. In several instances, he was successful in obtaining a relaxation of those edicts under which his friends suffered so severely; and he appears, in most, if not in all instances, to have commanded the respectful attention of those whom he addressed.

His 'Address to the Magistrates of Groninghen," his "Lamentation over that City," and his "Address to the Inhabitants of Holland," from which considerable extracts will appear

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* See his own Journal, pages 64. 68. 72. 73. 83, &c. and Nos. 17. 18. 26. of his Works.

in this volume, prove how well qualified he was to defend the principles of religious liberty, and how just were his views in regard to the true interests of nations.

On several trying occasions in the early period of the Society in England, he took an important part, and particularly on the occasion of an opposition which arose about the year 1680, to the establishment of the Discipline, or of any forms or order in the Society.* Several of the printed Epistles, from which extracts are made in this volume, refer to this occasion; and that entitled, "An Epistle of Tender Love and Brotherly Advice to all the Churches of Christ," contains an interesting account of the establishment of the Discipline; and very ably exposes that disposition which, under the pretence of higher spirituality, disdains all regulations, and contends for that *independence in society*, which Robert Barclay has justly said is *a contradiction in terms.*

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* It was in reference to this occurrence, that William Penn wrote his "Liberty Spiritual," and Robert Barclay his masterly book, "The Anarchy of the Ranters."

Stephen Crisp was far from confining his labours in this cause to his printed Epistles. He visited many of the places where opposition prevailed, and laboured with affectionate earnestness, in public and private, to restore those who had wandered, and to stop the progress of the evil; and some remarkable instances of reclaiming those who had been led astray, were the fruits of his labours, and of those of his fellow helpers.

Although he mentions in his Journal, that in the Autumn of the year 1676, he finds himself less able to travel than he had been before; yet it appears to have led to very little intermission of his religious labours; for he says he passed that winter in visiting the churches in Essex and Suffolk, and being sometimes in London.

The manner in which he mentions the death of his wife, in 1683, is very instructive. Great as was the trial, he dwells less upon the privation he was then called to bear, than on the *mercy of God, which had allowed her to continue so long with him, 35 years, and to be so great a comfort to him in all his afflictions.* It is evident by a passage in his Journal, page 56.

that they had children; but whether any of them were living at this time, I cannot ascertain.

His second marriage, which took place in the year 1685, appears to have been the source of much comfort to him during the two years which his second wife was permitted to live with him; and her death in 1687, when his bodily infirmities were increasing, afforded a fresh proof of that patient resignation to the Divine will, of which he was so remarkable an example. Neither afflictions nor the decay of strength, could separate him from that love of God in Christ Jesus which had prompted his arduous labours. His zeal was unabated, but his services were, from this period, chiefly devoted to the city of London, and his own neighbourhood.

John Field, who wrote a Preface to the Works of Stephen Crisp, says, that "Although in the latter part of his time he was unable to travel much, yet was he very diligent in frequenting Meetings, and preaching the Gospel therein; and to exhort friends to brotherly love, provoking to good works, and pressing them to diligence, and an exemplary conversation; and

to train up their youth and children in that way of plainness and simplicity, that became the humble disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It appears that he was in London, in the latter part of 1688, during the time of the great revolution of Government. Sewel mentions that, in this year, when King James was anxious to bring the Roman Catholics into power, and with that view encouraged the appointment of Dissenters to the office of magistrate, an offer of this appointment was made to Stephen Crisp, which he refused. From this proposal we may perhaps infer, that he was in easy circumstances, and generally esteemed.

The instructive Journal of Stephen Crisp closes with the year 1689, in which he again visited London, and exerted himself with others to obtain the suspension of the penal laws, by which the Society had suffered such severe persecution.

In the years 1690 and 1691, he spent considerable time in London; and it is evident from some of his Sermons preached in these years, and which were taken down and afterwards published, that his mental powers were in no

degree enfeebled. In 1692 he again visited London, to return no more. John Field gives the following account of his peaceful and triumphant close :

"On the 24th of the 6th month, 1692, being under much bodily weakness and pain, he was visited by his ancient friend and brother Geo. Whitehead ; who gave this account of the same, as the substance of some words spoke by Stephen Crisp, viz. 'I see an end of mortality, yet cannot come at it. I desire the Lord to deliver me out of this troublesome or painful body. If He will but say the word, it is done ; yet there is no cloud in my way. I have a full assurance of my peace with God in Christ Jesus ; my integrity and uprightness of heart are known to the Lord, and I have peace and justification in Jesus Christ, who made me so, (that is, upright to God.) Dear George, I can live and die with thee; and my dear love is with thee, and to all the faithful in the Church of God.'

"On the 27th, being the day before his departure, Stephen Crisp said, 'I hope I am gathering,' (as his expression was understood,) 'I hope, I hope ;' being then scarcely able to speak

out his words. G. W. near parting from him, asked him, Dear Stephen, wouldst thou any thing to friends?' After some pause, Stephen Crisp gave his answer, viz. 'Remember my dear love in Jesus Christ to all friends.'

"And on the 28th of the said Month, he departed this life, and died in the Lord, at Wandsworth, in Surry, about six miles from London, to which place he was carried for the sake of the air, from the house of William Crouch, in London, in a litter, to W. C's house there. And being very weak, was accompanied by several friends on foot with the litter, lest there should be any want of assistance.

"And after his decease, his body was brought to Grace-church Street Meeting-house, in London, where, on the one and thirtieth, a great number of Friends and others met to accompany his corpse to the ground; and many living testimonies were borne there, by faithful brethren, unto the Truth. And then his body was borne on the shoulders of his friends and brethren that loved him for Truth's sake, unto the burying ground at Bunhill fields, and there interred. And seve-

ral testimonies were also borne there at the grave to the Truth, for the sake of those that yet remain ; and that all might love and live in that which makes lovely and living unto God and in his sight ; and persevere in diligence and faithfulness in the Lord's work and service, and keep to that power, and under the government of that Spirit, which only is sufficient to enable us to follow the steps of them that followed Christ ; and that we might run our race with cheerfulness, finish our course with joy, lay down our heads in peace, rest with the Lord for ever, and have a place in that kingdom which will never fade away."

The reader of the Journal of S. Crisp, and of the selection of his Works here presented to the public, will not require much aid in forming a correct view of his character ; but the following extracts from the Testimony of the Friends of Colchester, given after his decease, contains some particulars relative to him which are not to be obtained from the other sources already mentioned ; and being drawn by those who knew him intimately, can hardly fail to be agreeable to the reader who

has become interested in the subject of these Memoirs.

"He had," says this Testimony, "a large understanding given to him, not only in spiritual, but also in temporal things, by which he was very serviceable to many widows and fatherless, and others, as divers can testify, being very ready and free to assist them; and as he had freely received, did freely give; and was therein not only serviceable to Friends, but also to others of his neighbours.

"He was zealously and conscientiously affected for the peace and prosperity of Friends in every place; and for that cause diligently laboured amongst them. And when he was not able to travel much by reason of his distempers, as in former days, he continued chiefly in this town of Colchester, and in the city of London, in the Lord's work and service, as long as strength and ability of body lasted.

"He was of a constant, firm, bold mind and spirit, against all those that secretly or openly sought occasion to make rents and divisions among us in the churches of Christ;

and laboured diligently to preserve the simple-hearted from being betrayed by their snares and cunning insinuations; exhorting them, as did the Apostle, to mark those that cause divisions, and to avoid them, and to keep in the unity of the Spirit, and in the sense of the Grace received; that all might grow up in it, into a further discerning of the mysterious workings of the enemy that goes round about, and tries every way, to see whom he might devour.

"He had a gift of utterance beyond many, was sound in judgment and doctrine, and very convincing to the understandings of many that heard him; for which cause, his testimony was affecting to many that were not of us, who would come to hear him when he was with us. And he would often call to people to come and try the sufficiency of the grace of God; that a measure of it was committed to them, and whether it was not able to save from sin, yea, to the utmost, all such as received and obeyed it. He divided the word aright, and turned many from darkness to light. Many mourners have been comforted by him, and many tender-hearted helped, through their inward exercises and conflicts of

spirit, and he has been a strength to them in their spiritual warfare; but his testimony was as a sharp two-edged sword, to the rebellious, obdurate, and hard-hearted, to the piercing through them many a time: and his very outward countenance hath sometimes struck to the hearts of some, as some have since confessed. And some that have gotten into a spirit of enmity, have been made, through the power that did accompany him, to come and acknowledge the hurt which that spirit had done them, and that the Lord was with him.

"And at taking his last farewell, when he was about to leave us, he was, for several meetings before his departure, mightily opened in his spirit, in our public meetings, desiring to be clear of the blood of all, (as he several times of late said he was,) labouring to speak to the states of all, and also to Friends services to which they were called in their day; to keep Truth's testimony clear from all unrighteous actions, that might be committed by those that lived not in that they made profession of, and to set judgment over them; saying, if we ceased to separate between the precious and the vile, the vile would over-run us. Also he took notice of, and rejoiced in, the love and

unity that had been, and was among us, exhorting and counselling of us to be and continue in the same mind, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

"He was beloved of his friends, his townsmen and neighbours, and left or had not many enemies, at least more than apostates and false professors of the Truth; who forsaking and turning their backs on God, no wonder such are envious, and opposers of his servants.

"He was very tender and helpful to divers, who have been of late called forth into a public testimony, and into the same work wherein he was himself employed by his great Lord and Master, Christ Jesus; being very tender and ready to help forward that which he found to come from the motion of the Seed of Life in any, and would speak a word in season to such. And his last testimony in our Yearly Meeting on that account, is worthy of remembrance.

"And in his last being among us, he would be very weighty in his visits in our private families, and much and often dropping some weighty discourse among us, for our edification, furtherance, and growth in the Truth.

"For all which works' sake, he was much esteemed, and was worthy of double honour; and we doubt not but is clothed with a large share of that honour, glory, and immortality with our God, which is the portion of all those that faithfully serve and honour the Lord in their day, as he did."

The principal Works of Stephen Crisp, with his journal and some other Manuscripts, were collected and published in the year 1694. There were prefixed to the collection, a Preface by John Field, Testimonies of Colchester Meeting, of the Second-day Morning Meeting in London, and of the Yearly Meeting of Amsterdam. Several of the pieces in this collection have been separately printed and extensively circulated, especially the "Plain Pathway Opened," and the "Advice to Friends, respecting the present and succeeding Times:" and the whole collection has been lately reprinted in America.

It is not to be supposed that all that is valuable in the writings of Stephen Crisp, is given in the selection contained in this volume. The design has not been to take all which was in itself valuable, but that which was likely to be interesting to readers in *general* of the

Society of Friends, and thereby to attract the attention of our younger members to those substantial Truths of which we are making a profession, and which appear to be so clearly stated and ably supported, in the works of this Author.

If I am not misled by a certain affection for the writers of the period in which Stephen Crisp lived, the reader of the selections which are here presented to him, will not find him a dry or uninteresting writer. He speaks on the most important topics which can engage human attention; and to the ear which is open to hear, he will not, I believe, fail to speak instructively and consolingly; nor will he be found without much of that simple eloquence, which flows from a clear and lively mind, firmly persuaded of the matters which he declares, and affectionately earnest to impress them upon those whom he addresses. There is very little quaintness in his style; and, though not laboured, it has much of the nervous force which marked the best productions of that day. His writings bespeak talents, and a turn of mind which might have rendered him conspicuous in the ranks of polemical learning, and might have led him to honourable distinction in the world; but like many others,

his contemporaries, not less favoured than himself with natural understanding, he chose the way which was every where spoken against; and despised the shame connected with the new profession.

It is observable that Stephen Crisp rarely touches upon points of mere speculative theology. His great aim appears to have been to bring those whom he addressed, to the consideration of their own actual state, and to point out to them the Spirit of Christ as the enlightener of the conscience; by their co-operation with which, they would be enabled to subdue the corrupt inclinations of the natural mind—be redeemed from actual sin in this life—and derive a well grounded hope of being made partakers of that precious atonement, purchased for us by the outward sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

They who differ from him in sentiment and external practices, will not fail to perceive, in the whole course of his life and labours, that his religion produced, in an eminent degree, those genuine fruits, the love of God and of his neighbour, on which, our Saviour said, "hang all the law and the prophets." This feature of love, earnestly seeking the spiritual good of others, though often united with very

plain and forcible reproof, is not less conspicuous in his private letters; of which many are preserved, and of which a specimen is given in the close of this Introduction, with some others addressed to himself.

Whilst speaking of his Works, it may be proper to mention, that about two years after Stephen Crisp's decease, a volume of Discourses, said to have been delivered by him at various times in London, was published, and had an extensive sale. The Preface stated that they had been taken down in short hand by a person not connected with the Society, who attended the Meetings where they were delivered. He invites any who are dissatisfied with their genuineness, to call upon him, and state their objections; and in a future volume he repeats the invitation, and states that no one has yet expressed to him any doubt of the correctness of the Discourses. Many editions of them have been printed *; and it seems fairly presumable, that, if their genuineness had been doubted by the Society at the time of their appearance, there would have been then a public disavowal of them. The

* A new edition of the whole of the Sermons, 32 in number, has lately been published by W. Alexander and Son, York.

reader of the Sermons who is acquainted with Stephen Crisp's writings will not, I think fail, to observe a striking accordance between them, both in matter and style.

In these observations on the genuineness of the Sermons, it is not intended to convey a sentiment in favour of the practice of taking down the discourses of our ministers. But these having been taken down by a person not of our society, who did not consider the practice improper; their preservation seems to afford a valuable testimony to the Truths most surely believed and *taught* by the Society, in the earliest times; and it is rendered the more important from the attempts which have been made to misrepresent the views of the early friends, as to some fumdamental points of Christian doctrine. A copious extract from one Sermon, which is stated to have been preached by Stephen Crisp, in the year 1688, is inserted in this selection.

I am aware that it would not be difficult to find in the works of Stephen Crisp, and those of many of his contemporaries, passages which, if written in the present day, would be considered as indicating a want of Christian charity.

But in judging the conduct of men of other times, it is material to take into account the circumstances by which they were surrounded.

The Society of Friends arose during a period which will ever be remarkable in the religious history of England. Notwithstanding the time which Protestantism had then prevailed, much of the bigotry and intolerance of Popery remained; and we had a licentious Court, and a superstitious People. The light of a better day was just breaking in upon the country; and though there probably were among all classes individuals whose eyes were more fully opened, the greater number appeared, like the man in the Gospel whose sight had been partially restored, only to see "men as trees walking." Great religious inquiry and agitation prevailed; and men were running from one form and doctrine to another, and contending for the various schemes to which they attached themselves, with that dogmatic violence which is so frequently the attendant of imperfect knowledge.

Some, however, could find no rest in these speculations, and were led to see the *in-*

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sufficiency of all outward rites and ceremonies—that the great doctrine of the Gospel is the regeneration of the human heart; and that the only means and way to attain to it, is that light or grace which comes by Jesus Christ, and which sanctifies, purifies, and brings to Him, by whom alone the entrance is ministered into the heavenly kingdom. (*See page* 337.) Amongst those who adopted these simple views of the nature of Christianity, the Society of Friends were at least conspicuous; and they were of course very obnoxious to all who were placing dependance upon external rites, or, who were supporting religious institutions, as the mere instruments of secular advantages. Even persons of piety, who were attached to the ceremonials of their respective churches, viewed the Quakers as a set of dangerous innovators, and as the enemies of religion. Nor were the zeal and plainness with which they thought it right to expose what they esteemed the corruptions of the Christian church, calculated to allay that asperity of feeling which was every where excited against them.

It was the unhappiness of that day, that good men did not know one another. It was not,

like the present, a time of ease and concord; it was a day of struggle and conflict. So imperfectly was the right of religious liberty then understood, that whilst each party contended for its own right of judging, each also, when it obtained power, denied the right to others.*

A considerable degree of enthusiasm was engendered; the strongest passions of men were called into action; and the strength of those who were engaged seemed proportioned to the occasion.

The early Friends were certainly not exempt from the influence of surrounding objects and circumstances. Their view of the standard of Christian requirements was far beyond that of the day in which they lived; and, fully persuaded of its correctness, and of the omnipotence of Truth, they evidently expected that it would very speedily expel error

* Bishop Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying," and Lockes' Letters on Toleration, both of which appeared at this period, prove how superior were those great men to the prevailing sentiments of the age; but, influential as were their works, I cannot but attribute the rapid progress of light upon the subject of religious liberty, in a great degree, to the persisting demand made for it, by the Society of Friends. And it is deserving of notice, that when the Society came to have considerable power, in Pennsylvania, the rights of conscience were fully recognized, and extended to all.

and corruption, and establish its own gentle dominion in the earth.

Man's expectations of results, are as hasty as his life is *short;* and even the apostles of our Lord appear to have fallen into this error of hasty anticipation, in regard to the progress which the religion of their Divine Master should make in the world. But He to whom a thousand years are as one day, directs the course of events by laws according with His own *infinite* goodness.

If then, whilst the views of the Society in regard to War, to Oaths, to the union of secular and religious matters, and to the simple nature of Christianity, thus exposed them to persecution and proscription from the various parties, who were struggling in that day for political and religious ascendency; it would be surprising indeed, if their history afforded no instances of indiscretion or enthusiasm.* But

* A man may be said to be enthusiastic whenever his feelings mislead his judgment. It is observable, that there is nothing which the *World* more easily forgives than errors of this kind, with one exception, and that is in regard to religion. A man may be an enthusiastic soldier—an enthusiastic poet—an enthusiastic lover—and may carry his enthusiasm on all these points to very absurd lengths, without offence to the world: but he whose love for his Maker and Redeemer

they sustained their Testimonies with a noble constancy; their religion, in an eminent degree, bore the fruits of love to God and love to men; and he that has well studied their character, and has a mind capable of estimating moral excellence, will not judge them by the occasional asperities of manner, so common in the controversial writings of that age, or by some acts in their history, which we at this day may deem unjustifiable; and overlook those labours of love, those fights of affliction, those sufferings unto death for the testimony of a good conscience, and that forgiveness of the grossest injuries, which are inscribed on almost every page of their early history.* Liberality of

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absorbs his soul, and, who, acting upon an imperfect judgment, is led to any erroneous views or expectation, commits, in the Court of the World, the *sin unpardonable*. There is, let it be remembered, such a thing as too *little*, as well as too much zeal; and it is worthy of remark, that where religious enthusiasm is so severely censured, religious indifferency does not rank in the catalogue of offences.

* It may not be improper to mention here a single instance out of many, which might be adduced of Christian meekness. On one occasion, when the Meeting at Colchester was broken up by troopers with swords and great clubs, whilst a trooper was beating one of the sufferers with his sword, the blade coming out of the hilt and falling to the ground, the friend took it up and gave it to the soldier again, saying: "I will give it thee up again. I desire the Lord may not lay this day's work to thy charge."

feeling has indeed made a great progress since the period we are speaking of; yet, much as we rejoice in the change, we cannot esteem the candour and courtesy which now prevail among the various professors of the Christian name, as affording so strong an evidence of that "Faith which worketh by love," as were the labours, the patience, and the forgiving temper, exemplied in the conduct of our early Friends.

We are not indeed to forget that the Episcopal Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland boasted, about that time, some of the most illustrious names in the galaxy of Christian Worthies—Usher, and Beveridge, and Leighton, and Taylor, and Cudworth, and Tillotson; nor must we forget the not less excellent names of Owen and Baxter. If we add to these the names of Fox, and Barclay, and Penn, and Crisp, some would probably startle at the alliance; but we trust all these Worthies have long since forgotten their earthly discrepancies, and learned to tune their harps together, to the praise of their common Redeemer—hymning,

"Him first—Him last—Him midst, and without end."

ERRATA.

In page 252, No. 26. Instead of "*From the Original Manuscript of a Book in Dutch*," read "*From the Original Manuscript of a Book* Translated into *Dutch*.

LETTERS.

The originals of the following letters are in the collection of Manuscripts belonging to Colchester Meeting. My friend James Barker, of that place, to whom I am indebted for a diligent search among those records of the *olden* times, very justly observes, in a letter relative to Stephen Crisp, that "his written remains evince him to have been a man very actively engaged in promulgating the doctrines of Truth, under circumstances of great outward opposition, persecution, and, at times, personal danger—in keeping up an extensive correspondence with the early and distinguished instruments in the same great cause—that he watched over them and the general affairs of the Society with an anxious solicitude and vigilance; and endeavoured, wherever danger appeared, to encourage, to caution, to warn, as the circumstances which gave occasion to his concern required; and it is equally evident that he possessed a corresponding influence, esteem, and love, in the minds of his Friends." The first letter which I shall give, is from James Parnel, to Stephen Crisp, which must have been writen in the year 1655. Though the phraseology is peculiar, the sentiments are important and interesting

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FRIEND,

In that stand, *and unto it keep thy mind,* which lets thee see thy foes to be of thy own

house: thine imagination is an enemy; thy wisdom is an enemy; that which hath been thy darling is now thy greatest enemy; therefore now sacrifice up thy darling, and give up unto the death, that the just may be raised to life, and the righteous Seed may be brought forth to reign, and be thy head, and so will the head of the serpent be bruised. And this, in thy measure, thou comest to read, as in the light thou dwellest low, which manifests unto thee thy condition; for whatsoever makes manifest is light; and that is the eye which must be kept open, which, in the children of the world, the god of the world blinds; by this the children of the Light the god of the world see, and so the tempter is known, resisted, and denied. So with this eye set thy watch constant; and let not the fool's eye wander abroad, which draws out the wandering mind after the visible objects; but stand in the warfare, not giving place to the enemy nor his delusions; but be content to become a fool, that all selfish thoughts may be judged; and wisdom thou wilt receive from Him that giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, to discern and know the enemy's wiles: for in the cross to thy will and hasty mind, the gift of God is received; therefore, it is said, he that believeth maketh not haste; be not, therefore,

weary of the yoke; for in faith it is made easy, and the impatient nature crucified, and patience hath its perfect work.

Therefore be still in the measure of light which exerciseth thy mind unto God, and *will* nothing; but let thoughts be judged, and the power of God work, that He may be seen to be all. And by this alone principle thou mayest be led and acted forth in the cross unto the carnal, and the denial of self, in particular and in general; and weigh not what is displeased, when God is pleased, for then thou givest no just occasion, but the enmity is in the world. But that which leads to walk towards God in faithfulness, that also leads thee to walk towards man with a conscience void of offence; so to that keep thy mind, and be not hasty to know any thing beyond thy measure; for there Eve lost her paradise: but lie down in the will of God, and wait upon his teaching, that He may be thy Head; and so thou wilt find the way of peace, and dwell in unity with the faithful, though of the world thou be hated: for in God is peace and well-being.

JAMES PARNEL.

From S. Crisp to J. R.

FRIEND John R——

I am sorry I have the present occasion of writing to thee, and would have forebore, if a necessity had not been upon me for the Truth's sake, and for thine; for I have a deep sense of thy danger, and that thou art in the way to dishonour thy testimony; for I am informed by several who love thee well, that they believe thou art run into about three hundred pounds debt, to set thyself up as a public shop-keeper. Whether they have dealt with thee about it or no, I know not; but alas, John! what is the rise and spring of this, and what will the issue be? Sink down into that which gives a discerning, and thou wilt find a secret mistrust, mixed with an earthly lust, and a crafty carrying it on, under a shew of Truth: that thereby some other things propounded, might the better proceed, or be carried on, to the making self somebody; and this ground is cursed for ever, and so will the fruit be. O! consider, is this fitting thyself for thy testimony, and the keeping thyself from entanglements in thy warfare? Or is it not rather a making use of the Name

of the Lord, and of Truth, to plunder others by fair means (or words), to get a visible estate into thy hand; and then thou may be plundered of it by foul means. It is an easy matter to preach and incur fines, when thou knows others' goods must bear the loss; thou art on the surest side, and then if it be taken away, at last a whining complaint of suffering for Truth's sake, must serve instead of paying thy debts, as it hath done too many already.

Dear John, I wish thou would yet take my counsel, and send every friend their goods home, with the money for what thou hast sold of theirs, and take thee to thy employment where God blessed thee, and in which thou grew up; and stand ready at the Lord's call, that if he please to make any public use of thee in his church, thou may be free from worldly entanglements; and if not, be content with thy daily bread, both inwardly and outwardly; and seek to adorn the Gospel thou hast preached, by a holy, simple, and righteous conversation; without which, preaching, believing, and profession, and all the highest terms men can imagine, are all in vain, and will end with an evil savour.

I have written these things, in love to thee and the precious Truth, in which my life stands, although it is often bowed down, to see so many abuse the profession of the holy Truth; serving themselves thereupon, and not caring to keep up the reputation of it; but venturing the glory of God, the reputation of his people, yea, and their own souls also, for the reaching after their earthly and corruptible ends and purposes, which they have propounded to themselves. I might enlarge, to shew the many evil consequences attending this practice, but hope by what I have written thou wilt consider the rest, and still account me thy friend in the Truth,

S. CRISP.

The 25th of the 9th Month, 1678.

From Stephen Crisp to William Penn.

Dearly beloved in the Lord!

My soul salutes thee, in the fellowship of that life that reigns over death and darkness, in which is the kingdom we seek; and nothing enters this kingdom, but what is born of this

life immortal ; and that we may be kept in it to the end of our days, is the humble prayer of thy true and real friend and brother, in this heavenly relation, in which thou may feel my integrity in a few words.

Dear William, I have had a great exercise of spirit concerning thee, which none knows but the Lord ; for my spirit hath been much bowed into thy concern, and difficulty of thy present circumstance ; and I have had a sense of the various spirits, and intricate cares, and multiplicity of affairs, and they of various kinds, which daily attend thee, enough to drink up thy spirit, and tire thy soul ; and which, if it is not kept to the inexhaustible Fountain, may be dried up. And this I must tell thee, which thou also knows, that the highest capacity of natural wit and parts, will not, and cannot, perform what thou hast to do, viz. to propagate and advance the interest and profit of the government and plantation ; and at the same time to give the interest of Truth, and testimony of the holy name of God, its due preference in all things : for to make the wilderness sing forth the praise of God, is a skill beyond the wisdom of this world. It is greatly in man's power to make

a wilderness into fruitful fields, according to the common course of God's providence, who gives wisdom and strength to be industrious; but then, how he who is the Creator, may have his due honour and service thereby, is only taught by his Spirit, in them who singly wait upon Him.

There is a wisdom in government that hath respect to its own preservation, by setting up what is profitable to it, and suppressing what may be a detriment; and this is the image of the true wisdom; but the substance is the birth, which is heavenly, which reigns in the Father's kingdom till all is subdued, and then gives it up to Him whose it is. There is a power on earth, that is of God, by which princes declare justice, this is the image; and there is a power which is heavenly, in which the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Lords, doth reign in an everlasting kingdom, and this is the substance. By this power is the spiritual wickedness in high places brought down; he that is a true delegate in this power, can do great things for God's glory, and shall have his reward, and shall be a judge of the tribes; and whosoever else pretend to judgment will seek themselves; beware of them; the times

are perilous. All men pretending to be believers, have not faith in the Lord Jesus; thou hast a good comprehension of things, wait also to receive a sound judgment of men.

I hope thou will bear this my style of writing to thee; my spirit is under great weight at the writing hereof, and much I have in my heart, because I love thee much. I cannot write much at present, but to let thee know I very kindly received thy letter, and was glad to hear from thee, and always shall; and my prayer to God is for thee, and you all, that you may be kept in the Lord's pure and holy way; and above all for thee, dear W. P. whose feet are upon a mountain, by which the eyes of many are upon thee; the Lord furnish thee with wisdom, courage, and a sound judgment; prefer the Lord's interest, and He will make thy way prosperous.

For my part, I have not been at London since the last Yearly Meeting, till now. I was last year at the Yearly Meeting at Amsterdam, and there taken with a fit of the Stone; it lasted three weeks; and in the winter following, it pleased the Lord to call from me my dear wife. As to my body, I grow very crazy

and weakly; can neither ride, nor very well go on foot. A mile is a great journey for me; but am in good courage and confidence concerning the main business I am continued for, namely, for the service of my God and his dear people. Our country, at and about Colchester, is very quiet; while other meetings are laid by for fear, ours is continued by faithfulness, and is exceeding large, and pretty many lately convinced, to my great comfort. Our dear friend Gertruyd continues at my house yet, and is a careful nurse to me. I know her dear love is to thee; and many times have I heard breathing desires go forth of her to the Lord on thy behalf, from a weighty sense of the concern that is upon thee. She is at Colchester, but intends to come up to the Yearly Meeting.

Well, dear William, I might write long ere all were written that lives in my heart towards thee; but, *in summa*, I love thee well, and salute thee dearly in that which is unchangeable, in which I remain

Thy true friend,

S. CRISP.

London, 4th of the 3rd Month. 1684.

From William Penn to Stephen Crisp.

Dear S. Crisp,

My dear and lasting love in the Lord's everlasting Truth reaches to thee; with whom is my fellowship in the Gospel of peace, that is more dear and precious to my soul, than all the treasures and pleasures of this world. For when a few years are come, we shall all go the way whence we shall never return. And that we may unweariedly serve the Lord in our day and place, and, in the end, enjoy a portion with the blessed that are at rest, is the breathing of my soul.

Stephen, we know one another, and I need not say much to thee; but this I will say, thy parting dwells with me, or rather thy love at my parting. How innocent, how tender, how like the little child that hath no guile! The Lord will bless that ground. I have also a letter from thee, which comforted me; for many are my trials, yet not more than my supplies, from my Heavenly Father, whose glory I seek, and the renown of his blessed Name. And truly, Stephen, there is work enough, and here is room to work in: surely God will come in for a share in this planting

work, and that leaven shall leaven the lump in time. I do not believe the Lord's providence had run this way towards me, but that He has a heavenly end and service in it: so with him I leave all, and myself, and thee, and his dear people, and blessed Name in the earth.

God Almighty, immortal and eternal, be with us; that in the body, and out of the body, we may be his for ever!

I am, in the ancient dear fellowship, thy faithful friend and brother,

WILLIAM PENN.

My love dearly to friends, especially in Holland, Colchester, and London. Farewell in the Lord.

From Stephen Crisp, to a Friend unknown.

Dearly Beloved,

In the Lord, my soul salutes thee, as one who is brought into my remembrance, by that spirit that doth often bow me to thy burdens, which, I know, are not a few.

Dear heart, it is nothing but the day that expels the night, and the day star brings the hope thereof: therefore, my dear friend, for as much as it hath pleased God to cause this star to appear, and that thou knowest thine eye hath seen it; be not discouraged because of clouds, but know that the day is at hand. And as concerning all Satan's buffetings, know and consider, that though they are never so many and strong; yet they are but like the waves of the sea, and they are limited. Feel thou an habitation in that which limits them, and rest in patience; and possess thy soul in that, and it will be well in the end: if there were no trials there would not be so much need of patience. Dear heart, feel my love, which is beyond words.

So, with my dear love to thy husband, M. and Anna, &c. I rest thy true friend,

S. CRISP.

From Stephen Crisp to J. T.

Dear Friend J. T.

It hath been some time in my heart to visit thee with a few lines, to express that true love

that I have had to thee ever since I knew thee; which love hath been the cause of my dealing so truly and plainly with thee from time to time: for I have always had an eye and desire to thy preservation in that Truth of which thou wert convinced. And I have always taken notice, that thy progress in the Truth hath been made harder and more difficult to thee, than it is to many, by reason of thy natural temper, which is forward and unstable, and hath been mixed with a zeal to get forward and to attain to high things; whereby the enemy, sometimes, hath taken his advantage upon thee to thy hurt. And then the tender love of God hath again visited thee, and shewed thee thy hurt; and thou hast been sensible that the Lord's hand hath been over thee for good; and this hath broken and melted for a season: but the enemy, who is always on his watch, hath sought, even out of that tenderness, to lift up thy mind into the conceit of some great attainments again; and then the former tenderness hath been, as it were, shut up and closed; so that neither the true working of that power, nor the love and tender counsel of thy friends and brethren, could be discerned for a time; which hath been a grief and exercise to us, the Lord

knoweth. Yet, notwithstanding, the love we have borne to thee hath not ceased; but for my part, I can truly say, that, from time to time, I have had an inward travail upon my spirit how to do thee good, and I thank God my labour of love hath not been in vain to thee ward.

Dear Jacob, I was exceedingly refreshed in the account I received from dear G. D. that thou wert open-hearted to friends, and that a tender love was in thy heart, working thee into more unity than formerly. Well, dear friend, nothing saves us but love, for God is Love; and nothing redeems us but righteous judgment administered in that love: and where this love is retained in the heart, and this pure judgment dwelt in, such must needs have fellowship one with another; for there all are kept meek and humble, and they have nothing nor any body to exalt, but only by the Name in which they find the salvation.

Now, dear Jacob, let me tell thee, I do not believe that all thy temptations are over-passed, or that thy enemy hath given over his seeking to winnow thee; and therefore,

there is a great necessity for thee to keep upon thy watch; and when thou feels most of the inflowings of joy, then to be most low, and careful to keep thy heart open to the Lord and to his people; and so shalt thou retain that which is given thee: whereas, if thou give way to that which leads into exaltation and much talking, thou may talk it away, and then be dry and empty in thyself. The nature of the true Seed is, first to take a deep root downward, and then to bring forth its fruit upward. Therefore, let thy soul affect the inward, invisible rooting and growth of Truth, more than the outward appearance; for where there is an inward growth to God ward, it is seen and discerned by the spiritual eye that God hath opened in his children; by which we do appear lovely, amiable, and comfortable to each other; and in this it is that the lasting fellowship stands. For if I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and want this, the life of the Seed will be burthened and oppressed in them in whom it is risen; though others, whose life stands in the affection, may be greatly joyed and lifted up thereby: but this will never bring to God, nor add any to the body of Christ, nor edify his Church. Therefore I have always found

it safe, to keep something in the storehouse for my own food; and to break only that bread to others that was given me for that purpose. And the same that I have learned by experience declare I unto thee, because I love thee; and I hope thou wilt be sensible of my love, and receive these lines as a token of it; and remember my dear love to thy wife and daughter. Tell her, I am glad to hear good news of her, and, if thou writes to me, let me hear how it goes with her. She is now come to years of understanding, and knows the leadings of the Light in her own conscience, what she may do and speak, and what not; and as she is obedient thereunto, she will find peace in her own bosom, be a comfort to you, and will appear lovely to all her friends.

So no more, but my true and unfeigned love to you all. I rest thy friend in truth,

STEPHEN CRISP.

From William Caton, to Stephen Crisp.

Amsterdam, 9th of 11th Mo. 1662.

Dear Brother,

With the salutation of dear and tender love do I dearly salute thee, having a sense upon

my spirit, of the joy and delight, which thy soul hath in the work of our Heavenly Father, in which we have been exercised for some years; and for as much as the Lord hath made it prosperous and successful in our hands, therefore can we rejoice in the fruit of our labour, even as I perceive thy soul doth.

Thine dated the 20th of 10th month, I have received; and thou may be assured it was glad tidings to me, to hear of the prosperity of my Father's work, in our native country, in such a season as this, wherein the faith and patience of many of the Lord's chosen ones is tried, through their great tribulation; which, I hope, in the Lord's due time, will be brought to a period. In the mean time, my soul rejoices in their faithfulness and stability; and it is a matter of joy to me to perceive they are, in their trials, like unto mount Zion, which cannot be moved.

O! what cause have we to praise and magnify the Lord, who, through his eternal power, hath brought such wonderful things to pass, which we have been eye witnesses of! therefore let us declare them freely to the sons of men, that thereby we may shew forth the

praise of the God of our salvation, who is making up his jewels in this his day: yea, the fan is in his hand; and He will, without doubt, thoroughly purge his floor;—the chaff, that will He consume, and the wheat shall be gathered into his garner; and we, together with the rest of his reapers, whom He hath sent forth, shall see the travail of our souls, and be perfectly satisfied in the will and work of the Most High; who is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, God over all, blessed for evermore!

Friends were glad to perceive the continuance of thy determination about thy coming over; and I hope will be more glad when they see thee. It is likely the number of Friends here, may be less than thou mayest expect; nevertheless I hope there will be refreshment to be found for thee when thou comest, in some who long to see the time of thy coming; yet I think it will not be good coming till the ice be more dissolved; which I hope will be shortly, if this thaw continues. It was refreshment to me to hear of thy refreshment with the dear brethren whom thou met accidentally at the Meeting thou wrote of; and it was glad tidings to me, to hear of the

effectual door opened in the places where thou hast been; which I know was also matter of refreshment to thy soul.

Things here with us are pretty well and still at present, as in reference to the Truth; and our little small meetings continue pretty peaceable for the most part; and the goodness and loving-kindness of the Most High is very large unto us; for which we have cause to praise the Name of the Lord, so long as we have a being.

Remember my dear love to thy wife, and to our dear and faithful friends in and about Colchester and elsewhere. The dear love of my dear wife, though thou art outwardly unknown to her, is to thee; and so is the love of our dear sister Gertrie and her husband. This is the substance of what I think at present to communicate to thee, hoping to see thee here shortly, if the Lord permit. Farewell.

Thy dear brother in that which many waters cannot quench,

WILLIAM CATON.

Extracts from a Letter from William Caton to Stephen Crisp.

Amsterdam, the 1st of 5th Mo. 1664.

"S. C. And my dear Brother.

"In the bowels of endeared love, do I dearly salute thee and thy fellow prisoners; as also the rest of Friends, of whose faith and patience, fidelity and constancy, health and welfare in the Lord, I am right glad to hear; the more at this day, because Satan, in and with his instruments, is exceeding busy to move the righteous from their stability, and to betray the simple from their simplicity, and to terrify the upright in heart with his raging cruelty. But of a truth the Lord is good to Israel, and rich in mercy unto all his chosen."

"Thy large and acceptable letter, dear Stephen, I have finally received, after much expectation; but am now well satisfied with the reason thou hast given, wherefore it came no sooner. I perceive Friends' exercise there, through the severity of the unreasonable and ungodly, is not yet at an end. Well, if it yet be longer perpetuated for the further purifying and trying of the Lord's chosen, I

hope it will tend to the glory of God, and to the furthering of their salvation."

"Thy letter came so well furnished with remarkable passages, I thought it therefore expedient to translate the substance thereof; accordingly I did, with passages out of the other letters, to the end that Friends in other parts might understand the same so much better, as now I know they will; it being communicated to them in their own language."

"I was glad to hear that you had now and then some liberty, notwithstanding the Mayor's severity."

"This day there hath been a man at our house, who is one of the brethren in Hungary, of whom I suppose thou hast heard, who hath escaped with his life, and is freed out of those parts; who gives a very sad relation of the deplorable state of that country, and the parts where the wars are. The greatest part of the brethren are ruined, several of them killed, others taken and carrried away captives by the Tartarians, with their wives and little ones. It seems the Tartarians, who assist the Turks, that broke in upon them in that part

of the country, were exceeding barbarous, yea, worse than the Turks themselves; and therefore was the misery which came upon the country, and the inhabitants thereof, the greater. As for the Turks, they seem to prevail much, and to have brought the Christians' army (so called) into great straits already; and as to outward appearance are like to overcome much of that dark country, where the Emperor hath kept his seat; so that it is thought that both he and his nobles will be forced to flee, as well as the poor and ignoble. The sense of the Turks thus prevailing, brings dread and fear upon many, who know not a refuge in the Lord; but as to us who have felt and known the arm of the Almighty, we can acquiesce and rest satisfied in the will of our God, in whose hand we are. And as to us, who are given up to suffer according to the will of God, it is little whether we suffer by the Turks or the Tartar Christians, that are in the Turkish nature, by whom we suffer daily; but blessed be the Lord, in that He doth not forsake us, nor leave us comfortless in our suffering; and therefore is it so much the more easy to us."

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY ROBERT BARROW, MAY SERVE TO SHOW THE PLACE WHICH STEPHEN CRISP HELD IN THE ESTIMATION OF THE SOCIETY, IN HIS DECLINING YEARS. IT WAS ADDRESSED TO HIM AND GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

King's Well, near Aberdeen, 15th of 11th Mo. 1691.

"My dear Brethren, being formerly, in my travels and proceedings upon Truth's concerns, used to write to dear G. F. who hath finished his day in peace and heavenly renown; and believing that the same God of endless mercy hath made you rich partakers of the same universal grace, that he had, with an universal eye over all the Church;" "so this is to let you know that I have been throughout the most part of this nation, to visit Friends and Meetings therein; and, blessed be the Lord! I find things generally well, in unity and good order, which makes Friends travail both easy and comfortable. And about Aberdeen and somewhat Northward of it, there is a fine openness, many of late convinced, and hopeful to continue. And though I am but a weak instrument, and have no fellow traveller, nor outward companions, yet, blessed be the Lord! I have had a very comfortable journey; and though it is the winter season, that I have sometimes travelled before day, and after, yet the Lord hath given me health in all weather."

"So, my dear Friends, let your prayers be to God for me, that I may abide in God's fear, and stand in his counsel."

THE LIFE

OF

STEPHEN CRISP,

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVINCEMENT, TRAVELS, LABOURS, AND SUFFERINGS, IN AND FOR THE TRUTH.

Written by Himself.

O! all ye saints, and all ye inhabitants of the earth, let the name of JEHOVAH be famous among you, for there is no God like unto Him; and let his mercies and judgments be remembered and recorded from generation to generation: for infinite is his goodness; and his loving kindness unspeakable. And although no man can fully recount his loving-kindness to him reached out, yet let all men testify of his goodness, and declare of his mercies, by which He is engaging the sons of men to Himself, and winning and gathering again the scattered to the true rest. And therefore well said David, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High; I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember his wonders of old. I will

meditate of all thy works, I will talk of thy doings." *Psalm* lxxvii. 10–12. And who can feel his goodness, and partake of his love, but it will constrain a testimony to Him? And in the sweet remembrance of his manifold, innumerable mercies, I am even overcome. For my whole life hath been as a continued series of mercy and goodness; and, all my days, hath He been my Upholder: when I knew Him not, He was nigh unto me; yea, when I rebelled against Him, He ceased not to be gracious; His covenant stood with his seed Christ: and for His sake He spared me. His long-suffering and patience was extended towards me; else I had been cut off in the days of my gainsaying. But O! well may I say, He is a God gracious and merciful, long-suffering and patient, full of compassion. O! let this his Name be proclaimed to the ends of the earth; and let the ears of the *heathen* be opened to hear the sound of his praise.

And surely the Lord hath had an eye of tender compassion upon me, from the day that he formed me, and hath appointed me to his praise, and to witness forth his goodness; for so soon as I can remember, and so soon as I was capable of understanding, he made me to understand that which consented not to

any evil, but stood in my soul as a witness against all evil; and manifested that I should not lye, nor steal, nor be stubborn, nor be disobedient, but should behave myself in meekness and quietness; and set truth before me, as that which was better than falsehood; and this same witness, even in the days of my childhood, ministered peace and boldness unto me, when I hearkened to the counsel of it; but there was a contrary nature and seed in me, that was of this world, and not of God; which inclined unto evil, and unto the way and manner of this evil world, as most of all suiting the carnal mind; and an eye began to open in me that saw what was acceptable with man, rather than what was well pleasing to God.

And that eye being daily ministered unto by the various objects and examples of vanity, a delight sprung up in that which was evil; and my senses became exercised with vanity, by which the pure seed became oppressed and grieved from day to day, and began to cry out against me; and condemnation began to be stirred up in me; and fear entered, where before no fear was, and the pure innocency was lost. And then, having at any time done

or spoken any evil, then the light, or pure principle in me, would manifest it to me, and shew me, that I ought not so to have done; and I felt condemnation, which how to escape I knew not. But then the evil spirit that led to transgress, would always stand ready to help in this need; and sometimes stirred up the subtilty in me, to plead a reason for what I had done, or a provocation, or a good intent, or else to deny, or at least to mitigate the evil of my deed; and so to stop the mouth of the witness of GOD, and to see if I could escape the condemnation of the witness of GOD, and procure my own peace. But alas! this was a miserable help; for the light would often shine through all this, and quell my reasonings; and shew me, when I was but a child, that in the pure reason that is from GOD, there is no reason for any evil, let provocations, temptations, or examples be what they can or will; and so was I often stripped from all my reasoning and coverings.

And then I learned another way to get ease from the judgment, and that when I was very young, about seven or eight years old: I would use, when judgment overtook me for evil, to yield that it was so, and therefore thought I must do something to please GOD

again; and so, hereupon, I learned to pray, and to weep in secret, and to covenant with God for more watchfulness; and so then I thought, for a season, I was as one unburthened from my weight. Yet this best state was accompanied with many doubtings and questionings, whether my evils were blotted out, or not; especially when I saw that I was again overtaken by the evil spirit, and led into evil thoughts, words, or actions; for the witness cried, even then, to have my whole mind given up to the Lord; and that in thought, word, and deed, I should serve Him; but I knew not that it was from God. Yet this I knew, that I wanted power to answer the requirings of that in me, which witnesseth against evil in me; and this I lamented day and night.

And when I was about nine or ten years old, I sought the power of God with great diligence and earnestness, with strong cries and tears; and if I had had the whole world I would have given it, to have known how to obtain power over my corruptions. And when I saw the carelessness of other children, and their profaneness, and that they did not, that I could discern, think of God, nor were in trouble, though they were far more

wicked than I, in their speech and actions; Ah Lord! thought I, what will become of these? seeing so heavy a hand is upon me, I can find neither peace, nor assurance of thy love.

Then the enemy would tempt me to rest, and be quiet, in that it was better with me than with others; and my reason wrought strongly to make up a peace to myself herein. But the pure witness followed me, and left me not, but pursued me night and day, and broke my peace faster than I could make it up; for my mind was in my own works, and I could see no further. I heard talk of a CHRIST and SAVIOUR, but O! thought I, that I knew Him.

My ear was lent to the discourses and disputations of the times, which were very many; and one while I let in one thing, and another while another. Sometimes I heard men dispute, *That God sees no sin in his people;* then I said, *Surely I am none of them; for He marketh all my transgressions.* Otherwhile, men talked of an election and a reprobation of persons before time; and that I considered diligently, and thought, if that were so, and I

could get so many signs and marks of an elect soul, as might bring me to quiet, then I would keep it; and not be so tossed as I had been.

Then I grew a very diligent hearer and regarder of the best ministers, as they were reputed; and went with as much diligence and cheerfulness to reading, and to hearing sermons, as other children went to their play and sportings. And when I heard any one treat upon that point of election, and how a man might know if he were elect; and would lay down signs of a true believer, and signs of an elect soul, then I would try myself in their measure, and weigh myself in their balance, and so gather up a little peace to myself, finding such things in me as they spoke of for signs; as, *a desire against sin,—a loathing myself for sin, —a love to them that were counted the best people,—a longing to be rid of sin, &c.* But, alas! here was yet but the blind leading my poor blind soul. This was not the balance of the *sanctuary;* and when I had gotten a little peace and quietness, and thought to hold it, alas! it would soon be shattered and broken; and when God's pure witness arose in me, that I must be weighed in the true balance, O! then I found I was much too light; then an-

guish would again kindle in me, and a cry was in me: *O! whither shall I go? and what shall I do? that I might come to a settled state, before I go hence and be seen no more.*

In this woful condition, the thoughts of death would bring a dread over soul and body; and trembling and horror were often upon me, fearing that I was set apart for a vessel of wrath for ever, and must bear the fiery indignation of God for ever. And oh! that word, *for ever*, would often be terrible to me, but how to prevent it I knew not; for now I began to perceive my own insufficiency, and my want of God's power, and that it was not in my own power to keep myself out of sin, and that the wages of it was death; so that I was in a great strait, sometimes thinking I had better give over seeking, and sometimes thinking, If I perish I had better perish seeking; and here the good got the upper hand for a season, and I became a diligent seeker, and prayer, and mourner, and would often find out the most secret fields and unusual places, there to pour out my complaints to the Lord.

When I was but about twelve years old, my general and constant cry was after the power by which I might overcome corruptions; and

although I heard the teachers of those times daily saying, "None could live without sin," and heard the doctrine of perfection holden as a dangerous error, yet that did not abate my cry: though indeed it did often weaken my belief of obtaining; and so made my prayer almost faithless, and hence without success. But I knew that without the power of God I must perish, let them say what they could: and I could not reckon myself saved while I was captivated with the corrupt and rebellious nature, let them all say what they could; for I remembered the words of Christ, *He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin;* and that I knew was I. In this iron furnace I toiled and laboured, and none knew my sorrows and griefs, which at times were almost intolerable, that I wished I had never been born, or that my end might be like the beasts of the field; for I counted them happy, since they had no such bitter combat here as I had, nor should endure that hereafter, which I feared I must endure after all: for I did see my misery, but I saw no way to escape.

Then I thought I had best not keep my misery so close, but disclose it to some that, may be, might help me; but well might I say, miserable comforters I found them all to

be; for then they would bid me apply the promises by faith, and suck comfort out of the Scriptures; and tell me of the apostle's state mentioned in the 7*th* of the *Romans*, and tell me it was so with him, and yet he was *a servant of Jesus Christ*; and such like deceitful daubings as they had daubed themselves with, in like manner dealt they with me; not considering that the apostle called that *a wretched and an undelivered state*, as I might well do mine.

But all these things took but little place in me; my wound remained unhealed, and He that wounded me, and was able to have healed me, was nigh me, and I knew Him not; for I went groping in that dark and dismal night of darkness, seeking the living among the dead, as many more did; but it was so dark, that we that did so, could not see one another. And as for the priests and professors of those times, the most of them would boast of experiences, and of the seal, and of assurances of the love of God, and what comfort they enjoyed by thinking or meditating on the suffering of Christ for their sins, &c. Alas! thought I, I could think of these things as well as you; but my wound still remains fresh, and I see that I am as one of the cruci-

fiers, while I love sin, for which He died; and my soul longed after some other kind of knowledge of Him, than that which was to be attained by reading; for I saw that the worst, as well as the best, could attain to that; and I durst not lean upon them so much as I had done.

Then I began to be somewhat more loosened in my mind from the priests, (though I left them not wholly,) but now began to find out the meetings of those then called Separatists, and to hear their gifted men, so called, whose doctrine I took notice, savoured more of zeal and fervency, than most of the priests' did; neither did I see them so covetous to make a gain of preaching, not yet being come to see how they coveted greatness and applause of men; but I was often affected with their preachings, though still the former bond was upon me, and they yet strengthened it: to wit, that if I were not elected, I could not be saved; and how I might know, no man could tell me to my satisfaction. So the fear of this would often dash my comfort; and then I began to take notice of the loose walking of such Separatists, yea, even of the teachers among them; that they were not yet redeemed

from foolish jesting, from idle words, from anger and passion; but sometimes broke out brother against brother, and so ran out to parties, and to breaches and schisms, and rending their churches, which they often both built and pulled down with their own hands. I also saw how inconstant they were, sometimes letting in one doctrine, sometimes another, tossed with winds. But not a word could I hear how I might obtain power over sin. Over some sins and some lusts I had obtained it, but over all I had not; and nothing else would satisfy me.

Then I began, when I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age, to seek yet further; and hearing of a people that held forth, *The death of* CHRIST *for all men*, I went to hear them; and after some time I came to see that there was more light, and clearer understanding the Scriptures among them, than among the former: so I began to be conversant with them, and frequent in their meetings, and came to be established in their belief: That *there was a dear Son of hope, and way or means of salvation prepared for all people, and none positively, by any eternal decree, excluded, as by name or person, but as unbelev-*

ers and disobedient. This ministered comfort awhile; and I set myself to believe, and to get faith in Christ, and to reckon myself a believer; and found it a hard word, even too hard for me, though I cried aloud many times to have my unbelief helped; yet when I saw sin prevail over me, Alas! said I, where is that faith that purifieth the heart, and giveth victory? mine is not such.

Then would the pure witness of God, arise and testify against me for my sin; and the more my understanding was enlarged, the sharper was my judgment; and now it grew so sharp, that I knew not how to endure it so well as I had done in my childhood; but the rough and rebellious nature being now grown strong, and I in the prime and strength of my youth, and seeing how others spent their time in pleasures and vanity, a secret lust and desire kindled in me to partake of their cup; yet for a time I was kept in, as with a bit; and rather took delight to take notice of the varieties of wits and inventions, that had been in foretime, which I found by books, being much given to reading; and so I gathered many sayings and sentences of wise philosophers

and sages, and in part obtained the knowledge of many ages gone before me.

These things I thought were as an ornament, fitting me for discourse, and for the company of wise men. And, alas! all this while self stood uncrucified, and all that was gotten was but sacrificed and offered up for the obtaining a reputation to self, which should have been kept in the cross; yet this served me awhile to feed that unwearied, searching, seeking soul of mine withal; and many things that I met with became as a life unto it for a season; and I began to bless myself, that my time was no worse spent. And, in this time I found two drawings, one strong drawing and inducement was into the world, wholly to give myself up to the pleasures, delights, and vanities of it; and another drawing was unto godliness, watchfulness, seriousness, &c. And I, poor man, knew not what to do, as to religion.

I felt a religious inclination in me, as I had done from a child; and could have been well content to have taken up some form of religion, but was sore discouraged, because I could see none of them hold forth that which

I wanted, either in their life or doctrine, to wit, power over corruptions; without which I knew religion would be in vain, and not answer the end for which I should take it up. So I desisted from taking up any form, and kept in the wild field of this world, and wandered up and down, sometimes to one sort of people, sometimes to another; taking a sharp inspection into their lives and doctrines, though I confess I left my own garden undressed, until many noisome weeds overgrew it. Thus I began to lose my tenderness of conscience which I had had, and began to take pleasure in the company of the wicked; and in many things to become like them, and came to be captivated more than ever, with mirth and jollity, and oft would sing when I had cause to howl and mourn. I also fell to gaming and pastime, and presumed upon the mercy of God, and had a secret belief, *That God would one day manifest his power, and bring me out of this state:* therefore I had often a dread upon me, of running so far into wickedness, as some others did; and was kept from many gross evils that my companions ran into: and herein was the infinite goodness of the Lord manifest, which, when I came to see it with a true eye, broke my heart; yea, my heart and soul

praiseth the Lord for his mercy, who kept me when I knew Him not.

Though the provocations and temptations were many, that did attend me; yet out of divers abominations was I preserved: and I must say and acknowledge, as the Lord said to Abimelech, it was the Lord who preserved or kept me. So this course of life went on for a season, about two or three years, until a weariness came upon me thereby; for many times, in the very midst of all my mirth, the hand of the Lord would be heavy upon me, and his righteous judgment would kindle in me, and put a stop to my course; and then would I lament me in secret, and sometimes complain to others of my sore captivity and slavery to sin; and often would I be arguing and conferring with them that were counted experienced Christians, how peace and assurance might be attained. Some would say, by reading and applying promises; but that way I had tried so often, and so long, that it took now but little with me: for I saw I was in another state than that unto which the promises were made. Others said, the only way was to be obedient to the commands and ordinances of Jesus Christ, and to be conformable

to the primitive saints, in walking in church order and communion, where every one had the strength of many, and all the church were bound to watch over every member.

To these counsellors I hearkened, and was willing to do any thing, to find the power, concluding that reproach should not keep me back. So I took up that ordinance, as they called it, of water baptism, expecting then to have found power more than before. And my will wrought strongly to bridle and keep down that airy part and sinful nature, and for a season I strove to uphold and maintain myself to be in a better state than before, though the virtue that should sanctify and wash me I did not feel, my mind being abroad; and the reasons that kept me were not the operation of the pure love of God in my heart, and his grace prevailing in me, to teach me, but rather an eye to the reputation of my religion, and that I might not seem to have run and acted all in vain.

These reasons held me but for a season, before the temptation grew too strong for my will; and the devil entered his own ground, and prevailed upon me, and led me captive into

sin and evil, and drew me into vain company, and vain sports, and delights, and pastimes again, as before. So I sufficiently saw that I wanted what I had wanted before; that I had grasped at a shadow, and catched nothing but wind; and that my baptism was short of John's, who did indeed baptize with a baptism of repentance, and prepared the way of the Lord, and made his path straight. But mine did not so much; and therefore was still more short of the baptism of Christ, in which the fire was to be found, that should burn up what was offensive to God, and grieved his Holy Spirit, and that should then fill me with his Spirit, which takes delight in nothing that is corrupt. This baptism I saw was wanting, and therefore a dissatisfaction began to grow up in me, both of myself, and of my way; and I testified unto the elders, so called, of the church, that God would shortly overturn all our worships and religions, which stood in outward and carnal things, and would make known some way higher than them all, that should stand for ever.

When they enquired what that way should be, I confessed I knew not, but waited to see what it might be. And about those days

many exercised themselves in talking and discoursing of a people called Quakers, after whom I listened; but though I hearkened with great diligence, I could hear no good report of them, but much harm; and many false and wicked lies were cast upon them: only this I took notice of, that they suffered cruel mockings, and grievous sufferings patiently. Now I did expect, that when the way of God was made manifest, it would be hated and persecuted; yet I thought that that should not at all deter or affright me from owning it, and walking in it, if once I knew it. But forasmuch as I heard they held perfection in this life, that was a thing the old wisdom of the serpent could not reach nor join with, but I reasoned against it strongly, in that dark, fallen wisdom, in which many are still fighting against the Lamb and his innocent life, saying in their hearts: Rule Thou in heaven if Thou wilt, for on earth Thou shalt have no place, no not one soul to bear rule and sovereignty over. And I can but pity thousands who are fighting Satan's quarrels in this matter; but having faithfully laboured with them in my generation, I leave them that are wilful and stubborn opposers, who will in no wise receive that which is

perfect in this life, to receive the wages of imperfection in the life to come. But I say, in this same fallen wisdom did I reason divers ways, too many now to name, against the truth, the fame whereof I had heard, as the Scriptures speak, *While I was in death and in the way of destruction.*

A messenger of this truth I had not seen; but longed much to see one, wishing night and day, that our parts might be visited by them, as I had heard others were; and, at length, the Lord sent his faithful servant and messenger of his everlasting Gospel, JAMES PARNEL, to our town of Colchester, about the fourth month, 1655, and in the 27th year of my age, who came in the name and power of the Most High God; in which he turned many to righteousness there, as he had in other countries before; of whom some remain, and many are fallen asleep.

When I saw this man, who was but a youth, I, knowing not the power nor spirit that was in him, thought to withstand him, and began to query and seek discourse with him; but I quickly came to feel that the spirit of sound judgment was in him; and the witness

of God arose in me, and testified to his judgment, and signified I must own it, as being just and true; and I the same day and hour testified, that all our rods of profession would be lost or devoured by his rod; alluding to that of Moses, and the magicians of Egypt; which is and certainly shall come to pass.

So that day I went to a Meeting, and heard him declare the everlasting Gospel, in the name and authority of the Lord, which I could not, with all my wisdom and knowledge, withstand; but was constrained to own and confess unto the Truth. And here, at the very first of my convincement, did the enemy of my soul make trial to slay me, and that after this manner: seeing my wisdom and reason were overcome by the truth, I could not therewith withstand it; therefore I received the truth, but held it in the same part with which I had withstood it, and defended it with the same wisdom by which I had resisted it, and so was yet a stranger to the cross that was to crucify me. And I was at liberty in the discoursative spirit, to lay out my wits and parts for the truth; but I soon felt my sacrifice (though I offered the best my earth would afford) was not accepted, but something else

was still called for; and a cry was in me which called to judgment; and the earth that had long covered her slain, began to be moved, but not yet removed out of its place. Great were the strugglings of my thoughts, and a great desire was kindled in me how I might comprehend the truth in my understanding, as I had done the doctrines and principles of other religions; but all my labour therein was to no purpose, for a death was determined upon that wisdom from the Lord; so I saw my labour in vain, my fishing could catch nothing, all that night, while I wrought in the dark, and had not the guidance of the Light.

So, in this state, I continued a month or two; but then a swift sword was drawn against that wisdom and comprehending mind, and a strong hand gave the stroke; and I was hewn down like a tall cedar, that at once comes down to the ground.

But then, O the woe, misery, and calamity that opened upon me! Yea, even the gates of hell and destruction stood open, and I saw myself, nigh falling thereinto; my hope, and faith, and all fled before me, I had no prop left me to rest upon. The tongue that had

been as a river, was now like a dry desert; the eye that would, or at least desired to see every thing, was now so blind, that I could see nothing certainly, but my present undone and miserable state. Oh! then I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, what hath all my profession profited me? I am poor and blind and naked, who thought I had been rich and well adorned. Then saw I the well favoured harlot stript, and brought into remembrance before God; and her judgment was come, and how to escape the fire of the vengeance which broke forth, I knew not. Oh! how doleful were my nights, and sorrowful were my days! my delights withered even in wife and children, and in all things, and the glory of the whole world passed away like a scroll that is burnt with fire; and I saw nothing left in the whole world to give me any comfort: my sun lost his light, and my moon was darkened, and the stars of my course were fallen; that I knew no more how to direct my way, but was as one forsaken in a howling desert, in the darkest night; and when I saw what God had done, (for I believed it was His doing,) I was ready to cry: *I am forsaken for ever, and never was sorrow like mine;*

my wound is incurable, and my sickness none can heal.

Alas! neither my tongue nor pen can express the sorrows of those days, in which I sat me down in silence, fear, and astonishment, and was encompassed with sorrow and darkness; and I knew none to make my moan unto. I heard of joy and salvation, but could scarcely think that ever I should be a partaker of it. I still wanted that living faith, which the apostle said, was *of the operation of God*, who raised up Jesus, the true seed; which seed I still felt groaning in me to be delivered from the burden of sin, and from the oppression of the carnal mind. After long travail, strong cries, and many bitter tears and groans, I found a little hope springing in me, that the Lord, in his own time, would bring forth his seed, even *his elect seed, the seed of his covenant*, to rule in me; and this was given me, at a time when a sense of my own unworthiness had so overwhelmed me in sorrow and anguish, that I thought myself unworthy of any of the creatures, forasmuch as I was out of the covenant of God; and hereupon was tempted to deny myself of them.

Then did the hope of the resurrection of the just spring in me; and I was taught to wait on God, and to eat and drink in fear and watchfulness, shewing forth the Lord's death till He should come to be raised to live and reign in me; so then I waited as one who had hope that God would be gracious to me; yet something in me would fain have known the time how long it should be: but a faithful cry was in me, which called that to death; and, upon a time, being weary of my own thoughts in the *Meeting of God's people*, I thought none was like me, and that it was but in vain to sit there with such a wandering mind as mine was, while, though I laboured to stay it, I yet could not as I would. At length, I thought to go forth; and as I was going, the Lord thundered through me, saying: *That which is weary must die:* so I turned to my seat, and waited in the belief of God, for the death of that part which was weary of the work of God; and grew more diligent in seeking death, that I might be baptized for the dead; and that I might know how to put off the old man, with his deeds and words, and imaginations, his fashions and customs, his friendship and wisdom, and all that appertained to him. And the cross of Christ was

laid upon me, and I bore it: and as I became willing to take it up, I found it to be to me, that thing which I had sought from my childhood, even the power of God; for by it, I was crucified to the world, and the world to me, which nothing else could ever effect.

But O! how glad was my soul, when I had found the way to slay my soul's enemies! O! the secret joy that was in me in the midst of all my conflicts and combats: I had this confidence: if I but take up the cross, I shall obtain victory; for that is the power of God, through faith, to salvation; and as I have found it so in some things, so I shall do in all, in due time.

Then the reproach of the Gospel became joyous to me; though, in those days, it was very cruel to flesh and blood, yet I despised it, and that for the joy that was now set before me; of which I had some hope I should, in time, be made a partaker, if I abode faithful. And that was my great care night and day, to keep so low and out of the workings of my own will, that I might discern the mind of God, and do it, though in never so great a cross to my own. Yet the enemy of my soul

followed me close and very secretly; and, taking notice how willing I was to obey the Lord, he strove to get up into the seat of God, and to move as an angel of light, to betray me, and to lead me into something that was like the service of God; and many sore conflicts did I meet withal, before I was able in all things to distinguish between the workings of the true Spirit and power, from that which was but transformed; but, forasmuch as I had now surely tasted of the love and goodness of God, I trusted in Him, and committed the keeping of my soul unto Him in singleness of heart; and manifold and daily were his deliverances made known to me, beyond all recount or remembrance of man; for which, *O my soul! praise thou the Lord for ever*, who cared for thee in thy infancy, and kept thee in the days of thy distress.

So the more I came to feel and perceive the love of God, and his goodness to flow forth upon me, the more was I humbled and bowed in my mind to serve Him, and to serve the least of his people among whom I walked. And as the word of wisdom began to spring in me, and the knowledge of God grew, so I became as a counsellor of them that were

tempted in like manner as I had been; yet was kept so low that I waited to receive counsel daily from God, and from those that were over me in the Lord, and were in Christ before me, against whom I never rebelled, nor was stubborn; but the more I was kept in subjection myself, the more subject were evil spirits made to me, and the more I was enabled to help the weak and feeble ones. So the eyes of many came to be upon me, as one with whom counsel and understanding in some measure was.

And the church of God in those days increased, and my care daily increased, and the weight of things relating both to the outward and inward condition of poor Friends came upon me; and being called of God and his people to take the care of the poor, and to relieve their necessities as I did see occasion, I did it faithfully for divers years, with diligence and much tenderness; exhorting and reproving any that were slothful, and encouraging them that were diligent, putting a difference according to the wisdom given me of God, and still minding my own state and condition, and seeking the honour that comes of God only. And a cry was in me to keep on my

spiritual armour; for all enemies were not yet put under my feet.

So I kept my watch, not knowing well where the enemy might appear; but after a while I found his appearance once more to be very sharp, and that upon this occasion. About the year 1659, I often felt the aboundings of the love of God in my heart; and a cry to stand given up to his will, which I thought I was, not knowing or foreseeing what the Lord was intending to do with me, but his eye saw further than mine; this love and tenderness, and bowels of compassion, wrought so in me, that it extended even to all men on the whole face of the earth, so that I cried in spirit, *O! that all men knew Thee and thy goodness!* And upon a time, as I was waiting upon the Lord, his word arose in me, and commanded me to forsake and part with my dear wife and children, father and mother, and to go and bear witness to his name in Scotland, to that high professing nation. But when that came to pass, I found all enemies were not slain indeed; for the strivings, strugglings, reasonings, and disputings against the command of God, that I then met withal, cannot be told or numbered.

O! how I would have pleaded my own inability, the care of my family, my service in that particular meeting, and many more things; and all that I might have been excused from this one thing which was come upon me, that I thought not of, or looked not for. But after many reasonings, days and weeks by myself, I thought it best to speak of it to some of the faithful elders and ministers of this everlasting Gospel; not knowing but they might discourage me, and something there was that hoped it; but contrarily, they encouraged me, and laid it upon me to be faithful. So then I gave up, and acquainted my dear wife therewith, which began me a new exercise, the enemy working in her strongly to stop me. But in much patience was I kept, and in quietness; and went and visited friends' meetings about Essex, and part of Suffolk, chiefly to see them, and to take my leave of them; and in some meetings the Lord would open my mouth in a few words to the refreshing of friends; but I rather chose silence, when I might so. The winter drew nigh, and something would have deferred it till next summer; but the Lord shewed me it must not be my time, but his time. Then I would have gone by sea, but

the Lord withstood me, and shewed me, it must not be my way, but his way; and if I would be obedient He would be with me, and prosper my journey, otherwise his hand would strike me. So I gave up all; and pretty much with cheerfulness, at last, I obeyed; and about the end of the seventh month I went forth, and visited the Churches of Christ.

As I went along in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, I quickly perceived that the Lord was with me more than at other times; and my journey became joyful, and the more so, in that though I were but weak, poor, and low, yet God gave me acceptance among the elders of his people; and, in every place, my testimony was owned, and divers were convinced of the everlasting truth: then I marvelled, and said: *Lord, the glory alone belongs to Thee, for Thou hast wrought wonders for thy Name's sake, and for thy Holy Seed's sake.* I got into Scotland in the ninth month, that year, and travelled to and fro that winter on foot with cheerfulness. Many straits and difficulties attended me, which I forbear to mention, it being the time of the motion of the English and Scottish armies, upon which succeeded the revolution of government, and the bringing

back of King Charles the Second into England. Well, about the 11th or 12th Month, I returned and travelled into the West, to Westmorland, part of Lancashire, and so up to the southward; and in about five or six Months' time, was, by the good hand of God, brought home to my wife and children, and relations; in all my journey having been sweetly accompanied with the presence of the Lord; and his power often filled my earthen vessel, and made my cup to overflow: *Praises for ever be to his Name*, saith my soul.

In all my journey I lacked not any thing that was good for me; but as it was my care, in singleness, to serve the Lord, so was the tender care of the Lord over me; and He supplied me with whatever was needful in my journey; yet, all along, a secret hope did live in me, that when the present journey should be accomplished, I should be freed from this service, and have liberty to return to my calling and family; but contrarily it proved, for when I had been at home a few days, it lay upon me to go up to London, to visit the brethren and Church of God there. So I went, in great fear and dread of God, to that city; and having continued there a few days, de-

parted northward again, at the commandment of the Lord, and found my ways prosperous wherever I went; and great encouragement did I daily receive from the Lord, who blessed my labour of love; that, besides the peace and joy I felt in myself, I saw the effect of my labour, and the travail of my soul in divers places made manifest, by divers being turned from darkness to light, and from serving the evil power unto the power of God.—But still trials attended me; and a prison became my portion, nigh two hundred miles from home, and great and grievous threatenings were breathed out against me; and the same spirit which wrought in the persecutors, both in their cruelty and subtilty, strove to work in me also.

But I cried to the Lord, and He helped me, and my faith failed me not, but I fulfilled my service and testimony; and at length was delivered, and several thousands more, by a public proclamation from the King; and I then returned to my house, after about eight months absence; and my heart was set to serve the Lord, who had been good unto me: yet the hope of being freed from this kind of service, lived long in me, for I found the work every

day more weighty than another, many false spirits rising up, and transforming themselves into the likeness of Truth, who were enemies to the life of Truth, who were the worst enemies of all. And I saw that Zion's enemy, who could no other way prevail, was now trying, if by a false pretence of holiness and obedience, he could deceive and beguile the simple: but I cried to God, to give me a discerning heart, and an understanding to comprehend the snare of the enemy, and that I might be a help to the weak; and He did so: and I saw the foundation struck at by the enemy, and I grew zealous for the Lord and his house, and testified freely against the secret deceits of the enemy; but this occasioned me yet more exercise and sorrow too; divers who saw not the depths of the workings of Satan, judging my zeal and fervency against that contradictious spirit to be needless.

But in meekness and patience, the Lord kept me out of the warring and striving mind; for I dared not strike them whom I knew to be my fellow servants, but them that pretended to be so, and yet served and promoted another interest. Them I often wounded with the weapon God had given: and they that came

to love the judgment, were sealed, but many perished in their rebellion and stubborness.—And the Lord arose and blasted the work of the enemy, and opened the eyes of many that were darkened ; and they came to see the end of that which had been the troubler of Israel ; and peace, unity, and true love were restored in all our borders. Then was my joy full, and my cup did overflow with praises and thankfulness to God, who had had regard to his heritage and people, and had delivered them from the devices of the wicked one. For my soul grew daily in love with Zion, and there was nothing in all the world so desirable to me, as the prosperity of the Gospel, and the spreading and publishing of His Name and Truth through the earth ; and so this love constrained me to travel with great diligence from country to country, to make known what God had done for my soul, and to publish the day of the Lord, yea the day of redemption, in which the captivity of the spiritual Israel should be brought back ; which did prove glad tidings unto many, who received the report and believed it. They came to behold the revelation of the holy, powerful arm of God, to their soul's satisfaction ; and, in most parts of England where I travelled, I found a daily adding to the

Church, such as were like to be saved; and hereupon my joy increased, and I began to be more freely given up to the work and service of God, and to the ministry of the Gospel.

And about the year 1663, I was moved to cross the seas, and to visit the seed of God in the Low countries, which I did with cheerfulness; and though in an unknown land, and with an unknown speech, yet, by an Interpreter sometimes, and sometimes in my own tongue, I declared the truth to the refreshing of many, and to the bringing back of some from error; and having accomplished that visit, I returned in peace to England.

And after a while, being required of God, I again went down into the north country, labouring in the word and doctrine with great diligence and fervency, along, or near unto the sea coast, and so down to Newcastle, and something beyond; and being led by the Spirit, I came back another way, more eastward through the land; and found, all the way, the plant of God's renown flourishing and growing, Meetings enlarged, and the hearts of Friends enlarged in love to me, and mine to them. Then being returned, a great weight

came upon me, concerning the great city of London, greater than ever before; and I went up full of might and power, and did daily (as the Lord opened my mouth, and ordered me) warn them of the abominations and wickedness that ran down among them like a stream, and declared the judgments of God at hand upon them, for their great wickedness; which followed speedily, both by war and fire, and many more calamities.

After this, about 1667, it was required of me again to go into Holland, and my dear companion, Josiah Cole, went with me; and we travelled to and fro, and visited the Churches about three months, and returned. Then went I again down into the north of England, my heart being abundantly drawn out towards the noble seed of God in those parts; and my love and tenderness of heart towards them, made all travel, and labour, and perils easy; because I still saw the tender plants of my Heavenly Father, in a thriving and growing way or condition; and I felt the virtue of life daily springing in me, which was given me to water the heritage and garden of God. And so soon as I was clear, I returned, having, still more and more, the care of the Church of

God coming upon me, which constrained me to diligence, and to be as swift as I might be; that so I might be as serviceable as possible in my generation, and might keep myself clear of the blood of all men, which I found to be no easy or slight work.

Being safely returned, and finding the presence and power of the Lord yet leading me to and fro from country to country, I was obedient thereunto, not of constraint now, but of a willing mind; counting his service a freedom, feeling myself freed from the cares of this life, having now learned to cast all my care upon Him. After one or two years travel thus in England, the Lord laid yet more of the weight and care of the affairs of his people in the Low Countries upon me, and I found drawing towards them; and in the year 1669, I went over and visited the Meetings, obtained divers new Meetings, and they set up a men's Meeting among them, to see to the good ordering and governing of the affairs relating to truth and Friends. And this time did it please the Lord to open my understanding abundantly, that I began to declare, in their own tongue, the things that God had

committed unto me to minister; and several received the everlasting Gospel, and were brought to feel the power of God, by which they are saved from the world, and the polluted ways therein. Then, while travelling in those provinces of Holland, Friesland, and Groningen, &c. I was moved to pass into Germany, to which I gave up in the fourth Month that same year; and, by the way, met with many perils and dangers, by reason of the horrible darkness, popery, cruelty, and superstitions of those lands and dominions through which I travelled, so that sometimes it was as if my life were in my hands, to offer up for my testimony; but the Lord preserved me, and brought me, upon the fourteenth day of that Month, to Griesham, near Worms, where I found divers who had received the everlasting Truth, and had stood in a testimony for God about ten years, in great sufferings and tribulations, who received me as a servant of God; and my testimony was as a dew upon the tender grass unto them. I had five good Meetings among them; and divers heard the truth, and several were reached and convinced; and Friends were established in the faith.

It was also just in an hour of temptation and time of trial among them, that the Lord had cast me there, for the Prince of that land, called the Palsgrave, had imposed a fine upon them for their Meetings, to wit, four rix-dollars the year for each family, which they (for conscience' sake) not paying, he sent an order to take the value in goods; whereupon his unreasonable executioners came and took away the treble value; but Friends suffered the spoiling of their goods with great joy and gladness, and counted it a happiness that they were counted worthy to suffer for his Name's sake, who had called them to the knowledge of his blessed Truth, and to bear a testimony in that dark desert, to the light of the Lord Jesus.

So I went to Heydelburgh, to the Prince of that land; and had a good opportunity with him, and laid before him the danger of his proceeding on in persecution. He heard me with a great deal of friendliness, and discoursed things at large with me; and in several things promised it should be better, as it did also after come to pass. So, having finished that service in Germany, I returned; and being come into the Low Country again, I

went to Groningen, where divers had believed in the Name of Jesus the Light of the world; whom, when I had visited in the power of God, and strengthened in the faith, I left, and returned through Friesland to Amsterdam. Here, by reason of my now speaking in their own language, Meetings grew exceeding great; and many strangers came flocking in, and a great openness I found in the country; but being required of the Lord to come to England, I left them to the word of that grace which they had received of God, which was able to keep them; and came over into England in the latter end of the year.

I went towards London, in order to visit the Churches in the western parts of England, whose faces in the outward I had never seen, though I had long desired it. So passing from London, I went through Berkshire and Wiltshire, having many precious Meetings with the Lord's people. I came to Bristol, where I found a people, among whom my soul was greatly refreshed; and I stayed with them about a week or nine days. Then, in a true sense of the Eternal Power, in which the true fellowship always stood, we took leave one of another; and I departed, and travelled that

winter with my companion in the Gospel, Samuel Cater, through Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, to the Land's End of England, visiting the Churches in those parts to our mutual comfort. And I returned by Plymouth, visiting the southern sea coast, even to Portsmouth. Then, passing through Hampshire and Surrey, came to London, and so to Colchester again, to the gladdening the hearts of God's heritage in that place; many of whom have, with me, many a time rejoiced and given thanks to Him that liveth and reigneth for ever, for my preservation through all perils and dangers, and the multitudes of deliverances, of which I was daily made a partaker.

Being moved of the Lord, I appointed a Meeting at a place called Chelmondiston, where divers had received the truth and testimony of God through me his servant; and there a priest who once, two years before, had betrayed me to the ruler, and had gotten me into prison, now procured a warrant to have me cast into prison, and so I was in the first Month, 1670, in Ipswich Gaol; being committed to the said Gaol for being at a Conventicle, (so called,) upon the Statute of the 14th

of King Charles, which saith: "If a person be convicted of a Conventicle, he shall pay some sum of money not exceeding five pounds, or lie in prison some time, not exceeding three months." And the Judge of Assizes, R. Rainsford, in his haste and passion, not regarding the law, but his own will, committed me to lie in Gaol until I would pay five pounds; but afterwards being convinced of his error, he wrote an order for my release at three month's end.

Being released, I was drawn forth in the love of God, again to cross the seas, about the fifth Month, 1670, and went to Holland, to visit the remnant there that had believed, and to strengthen their faith; and for some weeks I preached the Gospel in divers cities, unto the inhabitants and strangers, who came in great numbers oftimes to Meetings, hearing there was one that spake in their own language; and many were reached, and some overcome by the power of Truth; and the hand of the Lord was with me in a blessed manner, to the refreshing of my soul, and filling my vessel; and the overflowings of my cup made many glad.

Then, about the seventh Month, a concern arose in me to travel eastward, and to visit those dismal dark countries in the lower parts of Germany, and the borders of Denmark and Sweden, where the Lutheran Religion bears sway, and darkness and wickedness in the strength of it. O! the weight and burden I felt many times, as I travelled through their towns and cities, where it might well be said, none did good, none considered their ways, none thought upon the name of the Lord as they ought to do, but all manner of wickedness abounded; among whom I and my companion, Peter Hendricks, were as signs and wonders, because our manner and conversation, our words and discourses, carried nothing but judgment to them; and sometimes we gave them books and papers of Friends, which we left with them. And though the rage of many kindled against us, yet the Lord made way for us, and we had a safe and prosperous voyage, and came to Hamborough, and had a Meeting upon a first day with those there who were convinced, and then went down into the dukedom of Holstein or Holsatia, belonging to the kingdom of Denmark.

Having travelled two days' journey, about

seventy English miles from Hamborough, we came to Frederickstadt, where we found the brethren met together to wait upon the Lord, upon the fourth day of the week, who received us joyfully. With them we sat down, and were refreshed in the fellowship of that blessed Gospel, which is ordained for a blessing to all nations, tongues, and kindreds, who believe and obey it. After that we gave notice of a Meeting publicly in the city, to be on the sixth day, unto which many of the city came; and particularly the Skout, or chief Magistrate of the city, and the Messenger, or Sergeant of the city; and the power of God was much manifest among us; and much brokenness there was among the people, and they received the doctrine of truth with much love and tenderness.

On the first day of the week, in the morning, we had a Meeting again with the brethren, and such as were convinced, and a great openness was among us from the Lord; and in the afternoon we had another public meeting, at which were about a hundred people, and every one's mouth stopped; for though liberty was given for objection, yet none was made.

These things troubled the minds of some professors and teachers, who had enmity in their hearts against the truth, insomuch that two of them came towards evening, and desired a dispute with me, which being granted, about forty or fifty persons came in to hear; and for an hour or two, we spake together, and the power of God was over them, and they were divided between themselves; which when the more moderate saw, he went away; but the other, one Eppinhooft, stayed till he made his folly manifest to most that were in the room, in particulars too large here to relate. So truth stood over them, and the city was in a tender, cool, and loving frame, and divers were added to the Church, and to the faith which saveth; and the city hath remained in such a frame ever since, and hath been visited by divers brethren, as Thomas Green and William Penn, who have had good Meetings amongst them to their mutual refreshment.

So on the second day of the week, we met together early in the morning, and committed each other to God, with prayer and supplication; and they accompanied us to the Jider, which runneth by the city; and there we parted in

that love which never changeth, and set our faces again towards Hamborough, whither we came safely the next day. After we had visited Friends there, we took boat and came over the Elbe; and, by waggon, came to Bremen, where we left several books; and so we passed back to Oldenburgh, and thence to Embden, where, upon a first day of the week, it lay upon me to go to an assembly of the ministers, (a kind of Baptists,) at which, after one Hert Jansen had preached, and the prayer time was over, (for they speak no words in prayer, but all kneel down, and are silent, every one praying in his own mind as seemeth good to him,) I say, after that, I stood forth and spake in the Dutch tongue about half an hour, exhorting them to come to God's witness, that they might feel judgment set up in them to cleanse them, and to prepare them for the Lord, &c.

After this, the preacher stood up again, and vindicated and maintained by Scripture what I had said, exhorting them to receive my exhortation. The same evening divers people came together at the house of one Remelkie, a poor maid, who had neither hands nor feet; a devout woman, who sought after the way of God, and received us gladly to her house, where

I was moved to declare the truth of God among them ; and after that we had some words by way of dispute, and parted lovingly. The next day, divers of them came again to us and kept us company ; and about mid-day we parted very friendly. I, with my companion, took shipping for Delfe-Siele, and so we came to Groningen, and had a meeting with Friends, to our mutual refreshment; and thence came to Lee Warden, where the Friesland Lords had a law to put Quakers in the Bridewell for five years, that should dare to come into their province of Friesland: by which law they had taken three Friends of Amsterdam, and put them in prison. They had also made an order that no Quakers should go in to visit them ; which having understood, the zeal and love of God sprang in my heart, and set me over them and their wicked law ; and I took a pen and wrote to their Lord President, and told them they had done worse than heathens; and seeing they had made a law to imprison all Quakers, there was I and two more with me, were come to visit the prisoners, and desired liberty to do so ; for we feared God more than them and their law; and were come to fulfil our

Christian duty to our brethren, whom they had so unjustly cast into prison.

The President carried the letter to the Council, but the Lord limited them, and they let it pass by, and did not lay hands on us. So we appointed a Meeting in the city; and, after having tarried there several days, we went to Workum, and took shipping for Amsterdam, and came there on the first day morning, about the beginning of the ninth Month.

Being come again to Friends in Holland, we had many precious Meetings together in divers cities, as Alkmaer, Haarlem, Rotterdam, &c. And a young man having heard in Switzerland, where he lived, that he had a brother in Holland turned Quaker, in his zeal came down, thinking to turn him; but the truth prevailed upon him, the first and second days he heard it declared; so that he owned it, and became obedient to the cross, the first week he was there, to the great comfort of Friends, and most of all of his brother. So, having travelled through the Meetings, and visited Friends, in the tenth Month, I committed them to the Lord, and to the word of his Grace, and returned again to England; and was to

and fro visiting the Churches in London, and in divers parts of the nation, for three or four months.

At this time, I understood that divers exalted spirits were gotten up among them that had believed in Friesland, who began to set forth strange doctrine among Friends, and sought to unsettle the minds of them that had newly received the faith amongst them, and had begun to seduce them from their Meetings, and to wait upon, and to mind strange motions and imaginations, which had been the ruin of many in former ages, who were not arrived at discerning. So the zeal of God moved in me against that spirit, and the love to the tender seed drew me again over the seas, which was of great service to Friends and the truth. Thus I laboured greatly to inform the minds of Friends, of the depths of that ranting spirit, and whither it would lead, and where it would centre; having had long experience of it here in England.

Thus the power arose among Friends; and they began to note such as were disorderly and unruly, and to call them to an account; and took great pains with them, to regain and

recover them out of the snare of the devil; making many journies and visits to them, which proved not ineffectual, divers being helped and brought back. Howbeit, some were hardened, and waxed worse and worse, and turned against the power of God, into enmity and opposition against Friends, so that a necessity was upon Friends to clear themselves and the truth, of them and their evil works; and the more so because we saw that the mind in which they were so vainly puffed up, was fleshly, as afterwards appeared. So Friends called them to their general men's Meeting, but they refused to come; then Friends journeyed to them time after time, to warn them, and to exhort them to turn again to the truth, which they were fallen from; but when no counsel would take place with several of them, Friends put out a paper against them for the clearing of the truth.

And after these things I came for England again, in the fourth Month, 1671, and travelled through several counties, being much rejoiced to see the peace, unity, and courage that were among the people of God, after the sore persecution that had been among them; and passed up to London, and so back again to

Colchester. Here, having a sore sickness, nigh unto death in appearance, it came upon me to go into the North country, to visit the churches in Yorkshire and Bishoprick, &c. where I had not been of three or four years, by reason of my being much beyond the seas; but the love of the Lord abounded in my heart unto those dear friends northward; and I was pressed in spirit till I had cleared myself of all things that lay upon me in my own country. And upon the *31st* of the *8th* Month took my journey forward, and, going through the isle of Ely, found dear Samuel Cator, who was pressed in spirit to visit friends in Scotland, and so became my companion as far as Newcastle.

Through several places we travelled, to the refreshment of ourselves and many more; and the Lord delivered us out of the hands of the ungodly informers, who were then very alert throughout the nation, on account of the new act which was made to fine us for speaking in Meetings, Twenty Pounds the first time, and Forty Pounds a time after. This law made them greedy in all parts; but in all places they were, through the wisdom and power of God, frustrated; and though the winter was

very sharp, and my body now through much affliction very infirm, yet was I marvellously supported through that journey. Having parted with my honest companion at Newcastle, I turned westward, and came southward another way than I went; and so to London again; and, after having visited friends, I returned to my outward habitation again at Colchester, to the joy of my poor wife and friends, who had longings for my return, as I had to see their faces; which desires, the Lord to our comfort answered, about the twelfth Month, 1671.

Having continued visiting friends to and fro, the fore part of the year, about Midsummer I took shipping for the Low Countries again, to visit the flock of God, where I laboured and travelled about three months in Holland and Friesland, in the time of that great consternation and confusion that was upon them, by reason of the great and sudden progress the king of France did make upon the United Provinces: and though the foundations of their pomp, power, and glory were then shaken and ready to be overturned; yet I saw the foundation of Satan's kingdom stand very fast among them; and the people, instead

of turning to the Lord by unfeigned repentance, grew worse and worse, and debauched themselves by drinking, gaming, and sporting; and the burthen thereof came upon me, and I was made to cry out against them in the power of the Most High, and warn them to repent, and put away every man the evil of his doings. Also I wrote down the counsel of the Lord as it was manifest in me, shewing them the cause of their misery, and where their remedy must be. And I caused it to be printed, and made public to those countries; and many copies were given to the chief rulers and commanders; so I cleared my conscience in the sight of God concerning those nations for that time, and left the nation, returning for England about the eighth Month, 1672.

After having been sometime at my own home, and having visited friends in divers counties, I went to London and parts adjacent, preaching the everlasting Gospel, and witnessing the grace of God in Jesus Christ, which shined forth to gather the elect seed out of the house of bondage and darkness. And the Lord was with me daily, to the rejoicing of thousands, and to my daily encourage-

ment; for by his mighty power were many strong oaks bowed, and many subtil foxes prevented of their prey, and many wandering sheep brought home, who had for a long time longed to find the fold of rest; and whose souls will ever live with my soul, in his covenant, to praise Him world without end.

Having spent about six months in this manner, I found it upon me from the Lord, again, to pass over the sea, and to visit divers places where truth had been little or not at all sounded; and, in particular, that hard-hearted city of Embden, in East Friesland, where one John William Hasbert, a Doctor of Physick, received me with great cheerfulness; and I had a meeting in his house upon the first day of the week, about the latter end of the First Month, 1673; where many people of divers persuasions did hear the truth declared, in great plainness and simplicity; and, after some time, those that were convinced, were drawn in love to God to assemble together, to worship God in spirit and in truth, and in the silence of that fleshly wisdom that can speak when it listeth, and say what it listeth.

At the first, they sat down, about ten persons, in Hasbert's house, to wait upon the Lord: and when this was noised about the city, the wicked one stirred up the priests and rulers against them; and they stirred up the rude and ignorant people to assault them, mock, reproach, and revile them; and the rulers fell quickly to fining, imprisoning, threatening, and banishing those weak and tender plants, in almost an unheard of manner. They banished some sixteen or twenty times, spoiling all they had, save their clothes, and at last, fell upon them also; taking away their coats, hats, gloves, aprons, &c. &c. and driving them through the streets almost naked, aboard the ships that were to carry them away; all which and much more, by the mighty power of the Lord, did these innocent, harmless lambs bear with great patience and quietness, and were not dismayed at all at these cruelties; for the Lord had regard to his Name and to their innocent cry, and supported them, and doth support them; and they have found it true, that they that wait upon the Lord, have renewed their strength. Blessed be the Lord for ever!

So returning thence from Holland into Friesland, I continued about three or four

months, and published the glad tidings of salvation, in their own tongue, to all that had an ear to hear; and about the same time were divers great pillars, both as to state and religion, shaken; and divers of those who had been in great places in government were convinced, and their understandings were opened concerning the way of truth, and began to struggle and contend for it in that wisdom that was from beneath. These I faithfully warned and counselled in the love of God, not to seek to comprehend the truth, but to wait in lowliness to be comprehended by it, and gathered into the precious life thereof. But O! the cross, the offence of the cross, they could not bear with, but sought divers ways to satisfy themselves with owning the doctrine and words of truth, and loving friends who walked therein; but they came not down to the simplicity of the Gospel, (excepting one of them,) nor to be separated from the world, nor from those things in which the world's fellowship stands; though they were brought to confess the way of truth, and to cry out of the load that lay upon the soul. Howbeit the sound of their convincement did tend to the advantage of the Gospel, for many came to meetings, and that of the most honourable;

and some were convinced, of divers ranks, qualities, and persuasions, especially in Rotterdam, where meetings then grew very large, and truth came to have a good esteem, in the hearts of many who had hated it and us without a cause.

So, after I had spent three or four months in those parts, and found myself clear, I returned for England, against the General Meeting in the fourth Month, 1674. I then travelled with great diligence through divers counties, and went again to Bristol, and visited the churches in many parts of England, to my and their great refreshment; and the Lord was with me, and gave me utterance and wisdom as I stood in need; for He kept me poor in spirit and low in mind, and I knew that my dependance was upon Him alone, who knew well how to order both me and my service; and who gave me judgment to rebuke gain-sayers, and to stop the mouths of them that opposed themselves. So I continued till about the fourth Month, 1675, at which time I understood the former openness did continue in the Low Countries; and I was drawn in the love of God again to go over thither, to visit them, and to behold their order; which I did to my great comfort, and found the

noble plant flourishing, and a living testimony opened and raised up in divers of them that had believed; and they spake of the goodness of God in their congregations, warning all men that they might turn to the Lord by unfeigned repentance, and that they might wait to see his salvation.

And hearing of the great sufferings of friends at Embden, I went thither to visit them, and hearing of a law they had published of Twenty-five Pounds fine for every one that should harbour a friend in his or their house; I desired to see it, and took it, and wrote a book to their hard-hearted rulers and priests, and answered their wicked mandate with sharp and sound judgment, and caused it to be delivered among them; and the power came over them, and they laid no hands on me, nor did me any harm, though I was publicly in their city two days, and known by many of them. After this their fury abated, and friends began to have some more freedom than formerly.

About the eighth Month, 1676, having travelled through the Provinces, and visited many places and cities, I returned in the will

of God to my own home; finding my body much decayed and disabled from travel and labour more than formerly; yet satisfied in the will of God, who laid no more upon me, than He gave me ability to perform; and as He hath always been abundant in goodness to me, so He is to this day, *Blessed be his Name for ever!* And this I can say, my delight is to do his will; and my joy is that He hath counted me worthy to bear his Holy Name and testimony among the sons and daughters of men. And O! that all men would fear the Lord, and walk in the way of his righteousness, that they might come to have the evidence and testimony of his goodness in themselves!

I passed that winter in visiting the churches in Essex and Suffolk, and sometimes in London, where it pleased the Lord to appear with me for his Name and tender seed's sake, to the convincement of several, and strengthening of many: *Glory be to Him alone for ever!*

The winter being over, I again felt drawings to pass over sea; finding a particular care and charge laid upon me concerning those parts, in which the Lord had given me

great encouragement; and I saw that I had not laboured in vain: *Praises be to his Name!*

About the first Month, 1677, I took shipping for Holland, where I found friends very well and in good order; and their men and women's meetings were become a delight to them, as having not only enjoyed the Lord's presence in them, but having also seen the great benefit that had come thereby, and the ease they had from the weights that had formerly lain upon them. Having several times visited their Meetings in Holland, I went over into Friesland, to Harlingen, where many Friends of that country met me upon a first day; and we had two precious and large Meetings; and many professors came to hear, who had nothing to say against the testimony of truth.

So, having seen friends there, and finding myself disabled for long journies, I returned for Holland, and having staid there with great joy and comfort in seeing truth's prosperity, about the latter end of the third Month I came back for England, and passed for London, where I was most of that summer and in the parts adjacent. And then the Lord

put it into my heart again to visit the Meetings round about Colchester where I lived, which, with much pain and trouble of body, though with much joy in spirit, I accomplished, and found Friends in most places well; and where I found the subtile, crafty serpent seeking to scatter and to divide God's heritage, I reproved it with great plainness and confidence in the Lord, who had shewed me the mystery of that iniquity; and how the enemy of truth sought to cover himself with truth's words; and, under pretence of leaving all to the Power, would usher in a spirit of liberty to lay waste the blessed testimony of God, and scatter his people out of the good order into which the Gospel (the power of God) had brought them.

And in the service of God, after this manner I continued at and about home most of that winter, waiting upon the Lord to be led and guided in my service and testimony according to his will: for I found that though, through long experience, my senses were exercised in the service of God and the churches, yet I had nothing to trust to, as a guide or leader, how and after what manner to minister in the church of Christ, but the

same that led me in the beginning, even the immediate operation of the power that brings forth, in the will of God, all things suitable to their season, that the glory might be to the *power, and the praises to Him that gives it, for ever and for evermore.*

And afterwards, the winter being over, the Lord renewed my strength, and having further service for me to do, gave me ability.

And about the first Month, [answering to the third Month, N. S.] 1678, I found some powerful drawings in the love of God to go down once more into Yorkshire, where I had had much service for the Lord, but had not now been there for about six or seven years. So I went down to Hull, and visited the churches about Holderness, and Hull, and Beverley, Malton and York, in all which places I saw the glory of the temple of my God shine forth in great splendour, notwithstanding all the rage of the adversary; and I had a precious service in every place; and the hearts of many were opened, and the souls of many dear friends were truly refreshed, and the Bread of Life was plentiful among us, to our mutual joy and rejoicing, in this journey. My soul was greatly

comforted to see so many of the ancients, and honourable men and women abiding in their places, and growing up in the house of God as fellow-helpers in the Gospel with us; so, after about seven weeks tarrying in those parts, I committed them to the grace of God, and returned for London to the Yearly Meeting, where, having tarried a week or two, I returned and set things in order in my own house.

After a while I again crossed the seas, and went to labour in the little vineyard there, to my great refreshment; and going over about the fourth Month, 1678, continued there till about the ninth Month of the same year, in which time the Lord laid it upon me to go up southward, to divers cities upon the Rhine, where several had received a notion of the truth in a talkative mind, but were not come to a sense of the cross and dyings of Christ Jesus, nor to a separation from the foolish and vain customs and salutations that are in the world. I spake with several of this sort of people at Cleeves and Wesell. At the latter place I had a meeting upon a first day, about the harvest time there, where several heard the truth declared in the plainness and

simplicity of the Gospel; and a love was begotten in them. But O! the cross, the cross, that was and is very hard to that mind, that would fain inherit both kingdoms! Great struggling there was by divers of them, to argue themselves into a liberty to abide in the customs of the world, and to walk in and obey the light of the Lord Jesus also. But in vain was all that labour, and ever will be, for the disciple must be as his Master; and He sought not nor received honour of men: and having answered the witness for God in them, I was not studious how to feed their curious inquiring minds concerning things beyond their state and condition; but parted with them in the love of God, and true breathings to the Lord, for the bringing forth, in the Lord's due time, what He had begotten; and so I committed them to the grace of God, and returned into Holland, where it pleased the Lord to visit me with sickness for several weeks.

Finding myself clear of all those parts for the present, I caused a boat to be prepared and brought to the door of my lodging, and I lay down in it, being very weak, and so was conveyed to Rotterdam, where my strength

was so much renewed, that I went into their meeting on the first day, and, for about half an hour, declared the truth of the Gospel among them, exhorting to a steadfast abiding therein unto the end. Shortly after I got into the packet boat for England, and so to my own house, still remaining very weak, and freely given up in the will of God, that if my service were ended, I might lay down my head in my own habitation, after all my trials and travels. But the Lord was pleased to restore me; so that I was able to go and ride about and visit the meetings about home, and also got twice to London in that winter, where my joy was to behold the brethren that live in the unity of that power, that shall bruise Satan and his work under foot, and lay waste his kingdom. So having visited some of the assemblies of the Lord's people in Hertfordshire and other places, and cleared myself of what lay upon me in the city, I returned to my place in the will of God, remaining as a servant waiting to be ordered, and as a child waiting to be fed of Him who is the Father and Fountain of all my mercies, blessings and deliverances; *to whom be the glory for evermore.*

The next summer, finding no necessity lying upon me as formerly, I went not over sea; but after the general meeting was over, it lay upon me to visit friends again at Bristol and thereabouts, being at that time under a deep sense of some great exercise that the church of God was in, by reason of some who, under a pretence of exalting the power, sought to make void the wholesome order and government which the pure power had led us into, crying down formality and men's orders, &c. And when I came there, I found that this licentious spirit had hurt many, and grieved many more; and a weight came upon me; and I laboured in the power of the gift that the Father had bestowed upon me, in meekness and patience, dealing with every one in sincerity, labouring to shew them that were concerned, whither the tendency of that work would reach, even to the throwing down of that hedge that God had built about his heritage, and laying waste the work of the power under pretence of crying up the power itself; and by crying down men's orders, would draw from the Gospel order, and from the blessed fellowship that was in it.

And it pleased the Lord to give me an

open door among them, and many were tender, and became more watchful; though others, in the meanwhile, made but an ill use of all the tender dealings in the love of God, and sought thereby to strengthen themselves. After about twenty days I returned, and came to London; and towards winter, I returned homeward, where I continued in the peace of God, having my blessed reward with me, which no reflections of the adversary could take from me. And I was exercised, according to my ability, in visiting the assemblies of the Lord's people in Essex and Suffolk, where it lay upon me; and in helping and assisting the Lord's People according to my ability, both in their spiritual and temporal concerns, as the Lord God of my life gave me an understanding: for I gave up the ordering of my spirit unto Him; and He opened me in many things relating to the affairs of this world, that I might be as a staff to the weak in those things, and might stand by the widow and fatherless, and plead the right of the poor. In all which, I sought neither honour nor profit, but did all things freely, as I received of God: and He whom I served was my reward, so that I lacked nothing.

Therefore who would not praise the Lord, and who would not trust in his Name?

When the winter was over, I went again to London, and into Hertfordshire, and places that way, visiting the flock of God, and staid till our General Meeting was over, and then found drawings to visit the little remnant beyond the seas, in Holland and Friesland, and continued among them, and in those parts, about three months. In this time it came upon me, in the great love of God, to visit a little innocent remnant that had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and professed his name, in Crevelt, in the land of Meurs, who, for their testimony, had suffered many things and grievous, and been several times banished from house and home, and made to wander with wife and children to seek harbour or shelter in strange cities and places. These I found now returned to their dwellings, and was joyfully received by them, and much refreshed by them; beholding their faith and courage, and their steadfastness in the testimony they had to bear for the Lord. I tarried with them about three days, and had several precious public meetings in the city,

and sounded the day of the Lord's tender visitation in the ears of many of the inhabitants, who generally behaved themselves in great sobriety and moderation, neither mocking nor scoffing, nor evilly intreating us.

It is rare to find a people so moderate in those parts, which are in the borders of the dark Romish religion, and as it were intermixed with it. But I speak it to their praise, no man evilly intreated me, and the Lord's power was over all; for which we blessed and praised his Name. And having comforted and strengthened them that had believed, I did commit them to the grace of God, and left them, and returned again to Holland another way, through the Spanish Netherlands; where I saw great abominations and idolatry, and worshipping and praying to images, &c. which grieved my soul; and I could not but declare against it in several places, as the Lord made way. And being come back to Holland, I soon made way for my return home, and cleared myself of the meetings in Holland, and took shipping for England, and got home on the eleventh of September, 1680.

And soon after it pleased God to visit me with a sharp fever, which brought me in appearance nigh to the grave; in which His presence was with me, and supported me, and refreshed my soul many a time, so that death was not terrible to me; but I found myself quietly given up in the will of God; whether to live or die I was contented. But after about ten days the fever was abated, and I perceived my days would be yet added unto; in which I was well satisfied, having a constant resolution fixed in my soul, whether my days be few or many, to spend them in the service of God and his dear people, who are to me, as my mother, my brother, and my sister, yea, as my own children; finding a natural love in my heart to all my father's children, and a true love to the brotherhood. And my God hath put it far from me to despise the cause of the poor, or to respect the rich in judgment; but, according to the gift and understanding given me, I have walked with a straight foot in the gospel; the honour of all, with the praise of all which belongs alone to Him that hath wrought it; yea, his own work praiseth Him, and shall praise Him, who is worthy, both now and for evermore.

And after it pleased God to restore me to a measure of health and ability, I spent the following winter in visiting the Meetings about Essex, and went to Yarmouth and Norwich, where I had not been for many years; and I beheld the work of the Lord arising again in that great city, and many were made tender, by the powerful impression of the word of God. And having stayed thereabouts in Norfolk about a month, I returned again in peace, rejoicing in the prosperity of the Lord's work, and came by Ipswich, and so home.

Shortly after it came into my heart, in the workings of the love of God towards his people, to take a journey once more into Yorkshire, which proved to the mutual refreshment of me and many more; for coming to York a few days before their Yearly Meeting, I went to Scarborough, whereby many Friends, both of Whitby and Burlington, and the country round about, had opportunity of coming to me, now when I, through bodily weakness, could not go to them, as I had formerly done; and much service I had for the Lord and his people there, both in some particular cases, and also in the general and public testimony of the Gospel. Then

returning to York, and staying there a few days with them, at their general yearly meeting, I went thence to Hull, and into Holderness, and tarried thereabouts till about harvest time; and then finding myself clear of those parts, I returned to York, and thence to London: and after some days and weeks stay there returned home.

By this time, I was again overtaken with great pains of the Stone and other distempers, which brought my body very low; and little was expected by any, but my departure. And I found myself given up to the will of God, which I knew was best of all; and if my service in this world was at an end, I was content to leave it; and if the Lord of the great household had more work for me, I knew He could and would raise me up: and so He did in his own time; and I grew again able to go abroad, and got to our quarterly meeting in the tenth Month, and then after to visit friends in Harwich and Ipswich, and some other places, but was for the most part of this winter, 1681, about my own dwelling at Colchester, where I saw my desire in part answered, concerning several who were brought to the acknowledgment and profession

of the truth, whom I hope the Lord will build up by his power, and by the operations of his Spirit; for He alone can give the increase, to whom the glory and praise alone doth belong.

The next year, 1682, having spent the summer mostly about home and in London, about harvest it came into my heart, in the dear love of God, to go visit his church and people again, at and about the city of Norwich, that I might be a means of strength and refreshment unto them, in the sharp trials and sufferings that I was sensible were then coming upon them, to try their faith and patience. And the same day I came into the city, I went to their meeting; and there came one called a Justice, with constables and the informers, and a great rabble of wild and ungodly men, who seemed as if they would devour us, and haled me, with about a dozen friends, to their Judgment-hall, where the Mayor and Aldermen met: and divers practices were used to insnare me, and bring me into bonds; but the Lord God of my life was with me, as in former days, and gave me courage and wisdom, by which all their snares were broken.

Not having had opportunity to clear myself yet in public, I went the first day was a week following, after I had visited some country meetings, to their meetings in the city, where the Lord appeared wonderfully to bind and limit the adversary; so that the meetings were very large that day, both before noon and after noon, by reason of country friends coming thither, and abundance that were not friends: and all was quiet and peaceable, for which we gave thanks to God, who we knew was the Author of it, and had set his Divine power as a hedge about us for his Name's sake. And I saw in the light of the Lord, that the friends there were as soldiers, with their armour on, well prepared for the approaching conflict, which came forthwith sharp upon them, after I was come from them; which they have borne and suffered with great faith and courage, to the glory of the Lord, and the confounding of their adversaries; and the Lord hath appeared with them and for them, both supporting them in their sharp sufferings, and sometimes giving them some intermissions thereof; so that they are kept alive to his praise, that hath quickened and preserved them.

And having finished what was upon me there, I returned home, and continued at and about home that winter, and was visited with some weakness of body; and in the spring, found drawings upon me once more to visit the flock of God in the Low Countries. So I went first to London to the yearly meeting; where, though the enemy had opened his mouth wide to devour us, and much persecution was raised against our peaceable assemblies, and we were often deprived of the benefit of our meeting places, yet none could deprive us of the Lord's power and presence, which was evidently manifest amongst us; and the blessed fellowship of life was felt and witnessed to our great joy and consolation; for which high praises were offered up to God, through Jesus Christ, in the humility of our souls.

The yearly meeting of London being over, I went with divers brethren of Dantzic, Amsterdam, and Friesland, towards Holland, to be at the yearly meeting there at Amsterdam, which is three weeks after ours in London. And taking shipping at Harwich, we arrived safely at Rotterdam, where having visited friends, we passed together to Amsterdam,

where a pretty many friends from divers parts were come together; and we had a precious and comfortable meeting, in the unity of the spirit, and in the bond of peace, which made our hearts glad, and tended to confirm the weak and feeble ones, and to the establishing the testimony of truth in the hearts of them that had believed in Christ Jesus. And my God gave me understanding to open the mysteries of his kingdom, according to their capacities, to our mutual joy and refreshment. So our dear friends, and brethren, and sisters, departed to their several habitations and testimonies, to Dantzic, Holstein, Hamborough, and Friesland, &c. encouraged in the work of the Lord, and strengthened in the inward man.

Soon after friends were departed, it pleased God to visit me again with a very sore fit of the Stone-collick, which brought me very low in the outward man; and it continued so with me several weeks, with some small intermissions; so I was wholly disabled of visiting the meetings at Haerlem, Alkmaer, and in Friesland, &c. Continuing so weak, and finding myself clear, in the sixth Month, 1683, I set my face again homeward, and the Lord made

my way prosperous. And while I was upon the seas, I voided the stone that had so long been an exercise to me, and by the good hand of God I was brought home; where in a short time, I had a greater exercise to be tried withal; for it pleased the Lord to call away from me my dear wife, who had been indeed a meet help, and a faithful and loving wife to me, about five and thirty years, and had with a firm faith trusted in God, and had her eye to Him in all our sufferings, trials, and tribulations, and had seen before her departure how all had wrought for good unto us, and was satisfied in his will. And in this exercise I found the good hand of God bowing my spirit to his will; and I murmured not, but praised his holy Name, that had let her continue so long with me, and had made her so great a comfort to me in all my afflictions. And hereby doth the Lord work, to the fitting and preparing of my spirit, to give up all things visible and mortal, that at last mortality may be swallowed up of life; and that I, and all his dear people, may see this work perfected, is my earnest travail and labour.

After my dear wife's departure, I found the Lord still with me, supporting me in his

blessed work which He had called me unto; and my eye was unto Him to guide my way. And in the latter end of the year 1684, I received an opening in the truth, that the Lord would give me another wife, to be both a comfort and a careful nurse to me; but about the same time, I saw that the Lord had a service for me beyond the seas in the summer coming. So I went first to London, and having stayed there the yearly meeting, and been consolated and refreshed by beholding the glory of God that from day to day appeared, and in beholding the love and unity that increased among the brethren, I then went over to Holland, accompanied with my dear friend, whom I had seen would be given me to wife, and divers other friends both of Holland and England; and the Lord prospered our way; and we came there to the yearly meeting, where we found the old enemy had been trying his old stratagems, to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak, and had caused some to stumble and fall. A spirit of enmity had gotten up very high, and pretended that their matter should be heard at the yearly meeting; and so it was, and the love of God wrought wonderfully for their restoration, which, after several days labour,

was so far effected, that they with joy and thanksgiving came back, and laid by all their weapons of war and contention, and were again brought to a tenderness towards God and his people, to our mutual joy and rejoicing.

While I was in Holland visiting the meetings there, I heard that a door was opened for the truth, in a little city in Friesland, called Mackum, which I had long desired; so I went thither, and preached the everlasting Gospel amongst them, where I was received with great kindness; and the witness of God was reached in several, and a love raised to the truth, which in the Lord's time will bring forth good fruit.

Then returning into Holland, and having cleared ourselves of what lay upon us there, we did in the sixth Month, 1685, return for England; and in some time after, we signified to our friends and brethren what was in our hearts, in relation to marriage, which was approved of unanimously among them; and in the Lord's due time, which was upon the first of eighth Month, 1685, we took each other in marriage, and found the Lord with us in it,

blessing his own work; and He hath indeed manifested, that we are of God's joining; and He hath made us a blessing in his hand one to another, and true yoke-fellows, both in respect of our own affairs, and in the affairs of his church and people. For all this, I find my soul engaged to speak good of his Name, to bless Him, and praise Him, and to say, with his servants of old, *His mercy endures for ever;* for indeed she was a woman beyond many, excelling in the virtues of the Holy Spirit with which she was baptized; as she shewed forth both in life and doctrine, which made her to be a sweet savour throughout the churches of Christ, and a pattern of patience and holiness, discharging her place as a tender and watchful mother to her children, and as a careful and loving wife to me.

But alas! as the greatest enjoyments of temporal blessings have their end, so it happened unto me; for it proved the pleasure of the Lord to try me, whether I could part with, as well as receive this great mercy; for in the beginning of the year 1687, she fell into bodily weakness, and continued so two or three months; and upon the ninth of the third Month, she slept with the faithful in the Lord,

in a perfect resignation to his will, making a blessed end, to my great joy and consolation: for although it was hard to flesh and blood to part with so precious a companion, and to be left alone in my old age, accompanied with many infirmities of body, yet the feeling of fellowship with her in the joy into which she is entered, gives me great satisfaction, knowing well that her portion is with the righteous, and her eternal inheritance is amongst the just, where sorrow, snares, and temptations cannot come.

After she was buried, I went up to London, and conversed among the brethren three months, where the Lord was pleased to bless my service unto many; and I then returned to Colchester, where I continued great part of the winter following. In the year 1688, I went up again to London, and visited meetings thereabouts, as I found it upon me, and also some meetings at my return in Essex and Suffolk.

About the eighth Month, I went again to London, and was there in the great revolution of government; and sometimes, as I was of ability of body, laboured with other friends,

with the parliament that then sat in the year 1689, to get those penal laws by which friends and others had suffered, to be suspended; and by the good hand of God an act was passed for that purpose, which hath proved greatly to the ease of tender consciences. And after the yearly meeting of friends in 1689 was over, I returned again to my habitation, and continued there the whole winter, not being able to travel by coach as I had done, many infirmities growing upon me; yet I found daily renewing of strength in the inward man, and the word of the Lord lived in my heart, to the refreshing of my soul, and the souls of many tender babes that lived and grew by the milk of it; and in this is my fellowship with the living, and my labour, travail, and prayer, that all may be kept in the feeling of it; for this living word abideth for ever.

After this, he spent his time mostly in Colchester and London, in the service of truth, and finished this life the 28th day of the sixth Month, 1692.

A REVIEW OF THE WORKS

OF

STEPHEN CRISP.

The Works of Stephen Crisp were collected and printed in one volume, small *Quarto*, and are as follow, viz.

No. 1. "*A Word of Reproof to the Teachers of the World*," written in the year 1657.—*9 pages.*

This Work is a strong invective against the system of the Hierarchy—against the persecuting and vicious character of many, who assumed the office of Christian Ministers—and against the doctrine which they upheld, of the impossibility of being preserved from sin in this life.

No. 2. "*A Description of the Church of Scotland, with a Word of Reproof to the Priests and Teachers, and Officers therein.*" &c. 1660.—31 *pages.*

Most of the complaints made against the English Church, in the former book, are made against the Church of Scotland. Formality and a persecuting spirit, are strongly reprehended; and several doctrines which the Author considered to be erroneous, are discussed at considerable length, and with a good deal of that asperity of feeling, which marked the polemical discussions of that day.

No. 3. "*A Letter to the Mayor of Colchester.*" 1664.—9 *pages.*

No. 4. "*Another Letter to the Mayor of Colchester.*" 1664.—3 *pages.*

These letters were written from the prison of Colchester, where the first states, that the Writer had been confined 48 weeks for his religious principles. The first letter appears to have been addressed to a Magistrate, who had just entered on his office. After pointing out forcibly, the folly and injustice of attempting to coerce conscience, he thus addresses him in the conclusion of his letter.

"Whereas it is now come to thy lot, to bear the burthen of government of this numerous people, I cannot but exhort thee to wait on God for wisdom how to go in and out before them, and to put on bowels of mercy and compassion, and let not the weapons of cruelty be found in thy habitation, nor the devisings of mischief against the innocent, be found in thy heart: for if there be this, I tell thee, in the Name of the Lord, that all those devices shall fail, and not bring to pass the effect intended by them, and shall in the end leave a curse

and withering upon thy name, and a blasting upon thy blessings.

"Thou art now the third Mayor in this town, since some of us were committed to prison, for no other thing than being at a peaceable meeting of the people of God. And one leaves them bound, and another leaves them bound; and now it is the work that lies before thee, to unloose the unjust bonds of the innocent, and to ease and not aggravate the afflictions of the afflicted, which will be a work acceptable with the Lord. And in so doing, thou wilt, as thou oughtest to do, weaken the hands of the ungodly, and be a refreshing to the sober sort of people, who are weary of beholding such grievous persecution, even such as suffer little of it. And this is the way wherein thou and thy house may be blessed. So I have cleared my conscience to thee in true love, and my reward is with the Lord; and if my advice finds acceptance with thee, I have, as I said, my end. But, however, I am content in my portion, which is my inheritance in life and immortality, with them that are sanctified through faith in Christ; on the trial of which faith, I suffer bonds, and have done these 48 weeks, in the Moat-hall,

in Colchester; where I remain a lover of thy soul, a friend to just power, and obedient to all good and wholesome laws, but a witness against unrighteousness.

"*The* 1*st of the* 8*th Month*, 1664. S. C."

The second letter is written in the same manly and Christian strain.—It appears to have been addressed to the same Mayor; and the greater part of the letter is contained in the following extract.

"Such who are come to be fixed upon a principle of religion, which is certain and immutable, unto which the Scriptures of truth, and the testimony of their own conscience bear them witness, thou must not think that they can be so easily turned aside from that unto which they were so hardly, and with so much inward travail and labour, brought; for many have known a going through a vale of sorrow and tears, before we were thus established; and the testimony of our religion is not a light thing, that we took up at the pleasure of man, and can lay down at the will and

pleasure of man. Nay, it's not thy frowns nor threats, thy imprisonment nor amercements that can deter us, nor weigh down the weight of that which is so weighty, that we can depend the safety of our immortal souls upon it, which is the weightiest matter of all.

"And therefore, friend, consider in coolness, what a work thou hast lift up thy hand to do, and in what power thou dost it; and whether it be able to hold to the completing thy purpose, or nay. Did ever any fight against God and prosper? And did not the work of all persecutors prove fruitless, to the shame of them that have been exercised therein? Therefore cease thy works, and be still a little, and see if thou canst find out any matter against us, except in the matter of our God. And if that be the matter, I tell thee, thou hast a people to deal withal in this town, whose God and worship is dearer to them than their natural lives: and if thou shouldst so shut them up, and deprive them of that comfort to their outward man, which God allows, and nature requires, as to bring any to the laying down their lives for their testimony, yet the thing thou strikest at, would

still flourish more and more, and the assemblies of them that fear the Lord, will yet daily increase; and so thy purpose, and theirs that so much prompt thee on to this work, will be frustrated; and then anguish and vexation will begin to take hold on thee, and he that is thy greatest backer in this work, must stand by himself, and thou by thyself, and ye shall not be able to help one another, and he and thou will have a reckoning to make, that will be too heavy for you.

"Friend, this, in true love to thy soul, was upon me from the Lord, to write to thee, and I do heartily desire it may be as tenderly received as it is written; then will the effect be good to thee, which is the desire of me, who am thy friend, though thy prisoner.

S. C."

No. 5. "*An Epistle to Friends concerning the Present and Succeeding Times.*" *With a Postscript.* 1666.—30 *pages.*

This is a strong and affectionate exhortation, to those who were united with the Writer in religious fellowship. It calls their attention to the grounds of their union with each other, and of their separation from the world—to the temptations and difficulties to which they were peculiarly exposed—and to the fruits which were brought forth by those who were steadfast in their profession. In conclusion, it states the Writer's impression of further troubles which were coming upon England, and that the Lord's judgments would ere long shake a great part of what is called Christendom.

He warns the Society, under such circumstances, not to join themselves to any party, how much soever it might seem favourable to its views; but to keep its dependence upon that Rock which all the shakings of the world could not move.

The following extract from the early part of this epistle, will show the apostolic care which the Writer felt for the young Society.

"But you, O my friends! who had fellowship with us in the deep travails of our beginnings, and did come to Truth the same way, and have known the power and virtue of it, many times overcoming you in your inward man, which hath made you cry out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread;* and hath made you as a watered garden—O Friends! how shall I express or signify unto you those longings, those ardent desires, and earnest breathings of my soul, that you, even you, might abide to the end of all trials, and tribulations, and adversities; and might inherit that crown of immortality that is in Christ Jesus our Lord; and might not by any means be bereft thereof. This is singly my travail in body and spirit, that you might be kept and preserved out of all the subtil snares of the wicked one, who hunts for the soul even of those that have believed. And therefore, in dear and tender love, I have a few things to write to you, for the clearing of my conscience, and discharging of my duty in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord give you all a tender and an understanding heart, that both you and I may yet have cause daily to praise the Lord, in the glorious light of his salvation, which He hath manifested among us, by the revealing of

his Son Jesus Christ; to whom belong *dominion, honour, and glory, for ever. Amen.*

"And first, dear Friends! it is in my heart to put you in remembrance of that by which we were called and convinced, which as a foundation principle was laid in and among you; and it being unchangeable and unalterable in itself, doth therefore admit of no alteration or change in those that are rightly kept to it.

"It was a light which arose in our hearts, and shined forth from God, the Father of Lights, carrying in its appearance the nature and property of God, both in its condemning evil, which the enemy had sown or planted in us; and owning, allowing, and justifying every thing that was good and honest, just and equal; even those thoughts in our hearts, which were of turning towards the Lord, and seeking his righteousness. These thoughts were justified and encouraged by the Light, and all the contrary discovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tried.

"Now this Light did our souls rejoice in, as they had good cause, though it took away

our former rejoicings. Our pleasure in vanities and iniquity died; our glory in this world withered; our friendship with the sons of men decayed; and we stood in the light, and saw all these things, and were not sorry at them, but waited daily to see these things more and more brought to pass: neither was there a permitting our thoughts to go out, how we might prevent those damages, or repair those losses; but the cross of Christ was indeed our glorying or rejoicing; and the hope that was before us, did make us despise the pleasures, treasures and honours, friendship and delights of this world.

"And in those days, you grew into a feeling of the heavenly joy, where the hundredfold was witnessed in your bosoms; and the zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own Spirit in you, against whatsoever this light of Jesus in the conscience did witness against; and the Lord beheld your integrity, and blessed you, and multiplied you, and added to your strength and stature. And then did the fruits of this glorious work abound among you, in three more general and special effects; by which effects, or by their continuance among you, let all now come to search and try themselves, that

so, dear Friends, those that have continued faithful in them all, may persevere in like manner to the end. And those who upon true search do find that they have failed, and fallen short in all or any of them, may make haste to repent, and to turn to that which was the Root of them all, that they may not be found as fruitless and withered branches, in the day that cometh; lest they be cut off, and utterly consumed, and blotted out from among the living branches of the Vine. For a day cometh, that Truth will look into the fig-tree for fruit, and leaves will not defend it from the curse and blasting.

"The three especial fruits that did spring forth from this blessed Root, and were and are to continue and increase in us, and among us, to the end, are these:

"1. *Purity*, manifested in a godly conversation.

"2. *Unity*, manifested in dear and tender love one towards another.

"3. *Faithfulness*, manifested in bearing a constant and faithful testimony to the things we had received and believed, though it were unto great loss and suffering."

This Epistle has been several times printed by itself, and is now in print.

No. 6. "*A Word in due Season, or some Harvest Meditations.* 1666.—6 *pages.*

This tract extends a very severe reproof to the people, for the superstitious and riotous practices which generally obtained during harvest. It notices particularly the custom of shouting in the fields—the making of lords and ladies in harvest fields—and the singing of filthy and abominable songs. It warns also against inordinate eating and drinking—recommends that the portion of the poor in the field should be remembered—and that, at the time of Harvest, when the people are taking in the fruit and increase of their fields, they should mind the fear of God, which would keep them in the remembrance of Him, from whom every good gift cometh; that so it may be good to them, and they may receive it with humility and thankfulness:—none to murmur because it is no more, and none to glory because it is so much; but all to be contented, and to mind that which lets them see the blessing.

No. 7. "*A plain Path-way opened.*" 1668. —*23 pages. Written in the Ipswich County Jail.*

This work is stated, in the title page, to be for the answering all doubts and objections which do arise against the Light and Truth in the inward parts, &c. &c.

It is a practical address to the simple hearted Christian; and, appealing at once to the experience of such, in regard to that Light which manifests to their minds what is right and wrong, recommends an experimental acquaintance with its leadings, as the best answer to all the doubts, objections, and cavils which had been raised respecting it.

Even those who do not exactly agree with the author, will, I think, be constrained to acknowledge, that there is much to admire in the pious and affectionate earnestness of the following passages:

"All you that have been hurried and tossed with doubts and questionings about the Truth, come, hearken to the counsel of God at this time, once more sounded forth

unto you from his Spirit, by a servant of his without you, and answered by the measure of his good Spirit within you, which hath the same voice and cry in you, for obedience to what is made manifest of God in you. Obey the Light, and thou shalt see daily more of it, till it breaks forth as a morning unto thee, and till it shines unto a perfect day; yea, a day of gladness and rejoicing to thy poor distressed soul.

O! arise, thou that sittest sorrowing, and thou that art crying out in secret, because of the bonds and fetters that are yet upon thee; arise, arise, I say, in the name of the Lord God of Sion, who draws nigh to thee by his quickening Spirit; and hearken to his voice, who saith to the prisoner, *Come forth;* and to the bowed down, *Arise;* and to the feeble ones: *Put on strength, and follow me, and obey me; I will confound your foes, and break the strength of your enemies. As I have done for my people, who have forsaken all to follow me, and obey me, so will I do for you. And if ye in uprightness walk before me, and keep my covenant, as they have done, no power or strength of the enemy, within or without, shall be too hard for you.*

And when the Lord doth thus arise in your souls, and stir up his pure witness—when his arm awakens in you, and his pure Light breaks forth; O! what consolation is it to you; and how have many of you seen your vain doubtings expelled; and a clear convincement hath prevailed upon your spirits concerning the way of God. At such a time, you have begun to resolve to follow the Lord in his pure way of holiness, thus opened to you in the Light, though to the loss of all; and though it be to the bearing of your part of the great reproach, that lies upon them that love Him more than their lives. And at such a time there was felt a secret joy, in a hidden ground, in your souls and the seed of the kingdom that had been long buried, began to spring up in you; in which seed your souls felt some touchings of that heavenly life and joy, which, for the time, exceeded all things that this world could afford.

And whensoever you come to feel this refreshing dew upon your souls, then take heed and wait singly in the sense of it; keep your eye to the joy that is now set before you in Christ Jesus, the seed; for if you let your minds wander, and your eyes gad abroad,

there will be objects on every hand to lead you out from your soul's beloved, and to bring you to defile your hearts, and make yourselves an unfit place of residence for Him who is holy and pure, and who will not dwell nor take delight in a polluted temple; but will withdraw Himself, as He did from Israel of old, and from their temple, when it was polluted and profaned.

"And besides, when your minds are taken hold of, by any of the corruptible things of this changeable world, there will presently kindle a desiring, longing, and lusting after the enjoyment of those things, though contrary to the will of God; and then, next, the reasoner and consulter gets up in thee, and starts a question—May not I enjoy the Lord and this? May not I keep in the way of truth, and yet do this or that thing which my heart desireth? And though it be not perfectly according to the truth made manifest in me, yet I will have my will, my lust, my desire satisfied but this one time, and that is not much, saith the consulter; and this is but a small matter, there are others that do greater things than this.

"Such like reasonings enter the mind, and

yielding to them grieves and vexeth that good and righteous, tender Spirit that moved in thee, and brings a weight and oppression upon the *pure* in thee; and that withdraws itself again from thee, in which thy light did arise unto thee; and so a night comes upon thee. For where the serpent can bring any to make a question of obeying the truth, he is as ready to frame an answer, as to beget the question. But his answer always comes with a liberty and persuasion to disobey, as it did to Eve in the beginning. And when transgression is finished, then death enters upon thee with its dark power, and manifold sorrows pierce thy poor soul. Though the fruit was desirable to be eaten, yet now it is eaten, thou canst not come at life, to eat of that too, though thou desirest it; but art driven out, and kept out *with a flaming sword that turns every way against thee.*

"And here is now a ground laid for doubts and questionings of a higher nature than before, to arise in thee; for before thou doubtedst of the Truth itself, whether it were the Truth; but now, having tasted of it, and received a convincement of it, and yet let forth thy mind from it, after other lovers, and thy ears after

the voice of the adultress, and so caused the pure light to withdraw from thee, through thy rebellion. Now thou desirest thou mightest but see again what thou hadst seen, and feel again what thou hadst felt; but thou hast doubts and fears that thou shalt never see, nor feel, nor enjoy the like again. And now thou wishest, O, that thou hadst stood in the cross to thy own will, and that thou hadst denied thyself, that thou mightest not thus have lost the sight and sense of thy soul's beloved! And now thou seest by woeful experience, whence doubts and fears, and sorrows do arise; even from thy joining with the enemy, who brings forth reasons against the obedience to the light.

"And therefore now hearken to that which remains in thee. Though darkness and sorrow do encompass thee, yet there is something remains which gives thee a sense of thy state and condition, and makes thee to know thy loss and want. Hear the voice of this, and this will humble thee, and bring thee into true brokenness of heart, and contritedness of spirit; and as thou comest to know that state, then thou hast something to offer to the Lord of his own preparing, which will be far more

acceptable to Him, than a multitude of words, and performances, and duties, so called. And as thou, in the true lowliness of mind, dost come before the Lord, and offerest up this offering, God will hear in heaven, and will answer the cry of the poor and needy soul that cannot be satisfied without his presence; and He will remember his mercies of old, which never fail, for his Seed's sake, which is not yet brought forth in thee.

"And when God doth again shine forth unto thee, and make his power known, thou must expect it to be in judgment, because of the transgression thou hast gone into, that He may consume that in thee, which led thee into sin from his pure law, which is light; for *Zion is redeemed by judgment.* And therefore take heed lest thou be offended at his appearance; take heed that thou limit not the Holy One; but, if his appearance be with more sharpness and bitterness to the carnal part than before, it is but just it should be so: *It is the Lord; let Him do what He will.* He sees more cause now than before, by how much more thou hast sinned against his goodness; but bow to his judgments: *Bear his indignation*, as *Micah* said, *because thou hast sinned against Him.*—

Micah, vii. 9. And as thou yieldest to his righteous judgment, thou wilt know the coming to the midst of them, in which *the mercy is remembered* and made manifest.

"And therefore the hasty and impatient, that fly the judgment as soon as it begins a little to appear in them, they never find the true deliverance; but get ease another way, which lasteth but for a moment. But they who come to know a thorough work wrought in their earth, and the floor thoroughly purged, they come to know the true and lasting peace to their immortal souls. And although this is not obtained by ease and liberty to the carnal mind, which must die, yet the end crowns all that hold out to it; they are the saved ones, as Christ said, *Mark* xiii. 23. And they find the returning with sheaves, as the Prophet said, *Psalm* cxxvi. 5, 6:—*They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. They went forth*, said he, *with weeping, and bearing precious seed, but they shall return with joy, and bring their sheaves.* And as Christ said: *They that forsake father and mother, wife and children, house or lands, yea, or their own lives, for my sake, shall have a hundred-fold in this time, and in the world to come, life everlasting.* For-

saking and self-denial hath always been the way to life, and to true blessedness; and is the way unto this day.

"Therefore lay aside all consultations that are against thy obedience to the gift of God in thy heart, which reproves sin in thee; and give not way to vain and needless doubts about it; but as thou findest that thou hast been condemned and judged in thy disobeying of it, now try and prove whether, by taking up thy daily cross, and obeying it in thy words and actions, and in all things, thou dost not find the answer of sweet peace and joy.—And when thou shalt find it so, then will there be no more room for doubts and questionings against thy obeying of it; but as any questions or doubts do arise in thee, or shall be cast in thy way by any without thee, thou wilt feel the answer of it in thyself to thy refreshing: and so thou wilt come to witness the effectual operation of it daily in thy soul, to work thy change and translation out of thyself, into itself; and so thou wilt come, not only to know the light in thee, (for that one may do and perish, *For this is the condemnation, that light is come, and not loved,*) but thou wilt know that thou art in the light, and walkest there with

God, and in the holy fellowship, where thou feelest the Lord near thee in his light; and his reward is with Him.

"And so coming to walk and dwell in the light, thy conversation is now in heaven, as the saints' of old was; and thy unity is witnessed *with the Father and the Son*, as theirs was, who said: *If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with Him; but if any said they had fellowship, and walked in darkness*, (which all sinners do, for sin is the work of it,) such, they said, were liars. And such as walk in the light, as He is in the light, such come to know the blood that cleanseth and washeth from sin, and from all unrighteousness. And such as feel this work wrought in them, are brought into such a knowledge of the blood of Christ, that they need not doubt about it, nor have the occasion to raise a question where it is, or what it is, or what the efficacy of it is; for having the work and witness of the blood in them, this forthwith resolves all doubts that would arise.

"And so likewise, those that come to know the light in all things to be their guide, to lead out of darkness, and sin, and imperfections,

and to bring into the innocent and blameless conversation which becometh saints; and so come to know their footsteps directed before the Lord; such have done doubting and questioning about perfection; for such see that which is perfect to be come, and they, from the belief which they have of attaining it, are labouring to conform themselves unto that rule, and endeavouring after it: not as the carnal professors, who say they labour after a conquest over their sins, with a belief they shall never attain it while they live; but they so run that they may attain; and they have the true hope in them, which they that have, are purifying themselves, as He is pure. That is their hope, as John said: *He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as God is pure;* that so, *even as He was in this present world, so they may be also.* And so here the substance will come, and will cause the shadow to flee, and will answer all thy doubts and questions far beyond what arguments can do.

"And when thou comest to know this state, and to receive the white stone that hath the name within, thou wilt then be without doubt or fear, given up in the will to God, to do and

to suffer all things, according to his blessed will. And here is the true and perfect rest to thy soul, whoever thou art, that art now labouring in the iron furnace of thy own thoughts and doubts, in which the more thou givest thyself up thereto, the darker thou art, and the fuller of doubts; for they will beget and multiply one another: and the more thou reasonest against obeying God's witness in thy heart, the less able thou art to obey it; but the little strength that God gives thee, thou consultest it away; and, then, when thou wouldst be strong, thou becomest feeble; and when thou wouldst in some measure obey, thy own consultations stand in the way, and hinder thee; and the more thou increasest in knowledge in this state, the more thou increasest thy sorrow and condemnation; so that sometimes thou art ready to wish thou hadst never known so much of Truth."

"O! how my soul pities you whose state this is; and I have a great sympathy with your sorrows; and in bowels of tender love am I drawn forth to reach out a hand to help you, as one that hath obtained mercy to know deliverances, and to witness the way of it; and have the testimony of God in my heart, to

witness forth the coming of the Saviour to the poor and needy souls, to the relieving of them, and comforting of them. And my soul's desire is, that your bonds might be broken, and your souls might escape. But this I say, in the name of the Lord, to you all, there is no way for your deliverance, but each of you giving up in single obedience to that faithful and true witness of God which stirs and moves in thee against thy sins. And therefore wait thou to feel thy mind and will subjected thereunto, that thou mayest feel thyself to be one of those willing people in this the day of God's power; and cease from thy reasonings against thy obeying the truth, and from saying thou canst not, thou wantest power, and when God gives thee grace, then thou wilt obey. These sayings are in vain: for though it is true that none can obey the Lord but by his grace and power given unto them, yet He hath made his grace, *even that which bringeth salvation, to appear unto all men*, as in *Titus* ii. 11; and it hath appeared unto thee, and in thee to whom I write, and is a reprover in thee; and thou must turn to that which smites thee, and then thou turnest to the grace of God; for it is his grace that strives with thee, to lead thee out of the evil

that it reproves in thee, and so out of the world that lies in the evil, up to God from whence the grace cometh. For whosoever do give up to the drawings of the good spirit of God that moves in them, and in obedience thereto do deny themselves of their own wills, and lusts, and evil desires and pleasures, such want not power, but feel Him near to them who works the willingness first, and then the deed according to his pleasure; and so the glory comes alone to be His.

"And then thou knowest the mystery of the cross, and how it is the power of God, which all that reject the cross, complain for want of. And so, as long as thou livest in the cross, thou livest in the power, and thy obeying is easy, and all things are possible to thee through it; and as long as thou art daily dying to that which is corruptible, thou feelest the more life, and joy, and pleasure in that which is everlasting; and thy desires grow more and more fervent, after a full and perfect enjoyment of it in the pure unity of spirit.

"And those desires growing strong in thee, it grows a lighter thing to thee to part with that which hinders, though it be thy bosom

sin: thy Dalilahs and darlings, all must go, for the love thou hast to Truth. And such only as have this love, and continue in it, are counted worthy to be heirs of the kingdom of God; for so long as any thing is hugged and loved besides the Lord, if the Lord sho ld manifest his love to thee, thou wouldst play the harlot, and abuse his mercies, and cleave to thy old lovers, as Israel of old did, that were after the flesh.

"And therefore think it not strange to be brought through manifold trials, that thereby thou mayst be purged, and prepared as a bride, for the true Husband, Christ Jesus; for there are many that desire acquaintance with Him, but are not fitted for Him. They must be washed first, and trimmed first, and must put off the vile raiment first, and must come to know the white linen put on; and while this work is doing, what need of patience and quietness of spirit is there! what need of subjection to the workings of that Holy Spirit in all things! that thou mayst not be setting limits and bounds to that which must bound and limit thee in all things; nor say in thine heart, If my trials were but so, or my exercises so or so, I could then bear them; but rather

submit, in all things, willingly to do and suffer, and to be tried and exercised, even as it pleases the Lord to order, or suffer thee to be tried: and in all his dealings, say with the good man, *It is the Lord, let Him do what He will with thee.*

"And whosoever give up thus to Him, though He slay them, yet shall they live; though He wound them, yet He will heal them again. Therefore, learn patience and stillness of mind; for by taking thought, thou canst add nothing in this work."

No. 8. *A Backslider Reproved, and his Folly made manifest.* 1669.—23 *pages.*

This is a controversial Tract in answer to a book written by one Robert Cobbet, who had formerly been a member of the Society, and who, having left it, controverted the doctrine of the Light of Christ.

Crisp certainly treats his opponent with very little ceremony, and points out his inconsistencies and contradictions in that acrimonious style, which marked too much the controversial writings of good men at that period. The following extract from the opening of the book may suffice as a specimen.

"It is not a new nor strange thing, to see the old enemy of the Light, viz. the prince of darkness, to be diligent in raising up as high mountains and towers as he can, to keep it from shining; and as he can bring forth no evil to man of himself, without some instrument into which he gets an entrance, therefore he is diligent in persuading and tempting from the Light, even those that have seen the appearance of it, and not become so subject to it as they should have been; whose foolish

hearts he darkens, and fills their minds with vain imaginations; and then are they choice instruments for his purpose, as bearing something more of his image (who himself abode not in the Truth) than others.

"And such as these he always spurred on in a blind zeal against the Light, as that which was most destructive to his and their works of darkness. And among this sort of instruments, here is one Robert Cobbet, hath presented himself as an enemy to the doctrine of the Light, though he is indeed but as one of the meanest and shatteredest of that camp, and hath attained to but a small measure of that subtilty which this father and prince of darkness doth use to furnish his children withal, that are capable to receive it. But however, what he hath, or thinketh he hath, he hath adventured to present to public view; though indeed it is as a rod for his own chastisement. And I heartily wish there may be so much sense left in him, that he may feel the smart of it, and may amend, and leave off his folly and blind zeal, and submit to that which comprehends him, his spirit, and works. For I knew a time when he could not have believed, that he should have been led to such a depth

of confusion, in opposing the Light, as now he is; though he was never faithful to it as he ought, but sought, in his fallen, corruptible wisdom, to have comprehended it; but I desire he may yet see a death upon that which hath, unto this day, kept his soul in death and darkness. And in order thereunto, and for the Truth's sake, I have written these few lines, briefly to shew him and others his confusions, contradictions, and absurdities; or at least a few of those many which he hath uttered, and printed in his book, called, *A Word to the Upright, &c.*

"And therefore, Reader, take notice, that after his book called *God's Truth attested*, was made public, and something was written in answer thereto, shewing him how he contradicted himself and the Scriptures too; in a seeming reply thereto, he published this, called, 'A Word to the Upright,' which, he saith, 'is to establish them in these erring days, and to keep the young sprouts of the nation from corruption in opinion;' which, whether R. C. hath written a piece that is likely to prove an establishing of the upright from error, or to prevent the young sprouts from corruption in principle or opinion, will

more appear anon to the considerate reader, when he hath rightly weighed the consequences of letting in all his doctrines for Truth, whether it will not render them more like to distracted men, than principal Christians."

I cannot but regret that the good man ever dipped his pen in the ink of controversy, at a period in which the extreme difficulty of conducting it in a truly Christian spirit, reigned in full power.

No. 9. "*A Letter from Germany to Friends, exhorting them to diligence in Meetings.*"—1669.—*4 pages.*

This is a short, lively exhortation, evincing the Writer's care over his Friends at home, when absent from them.

No. 10. "*A Word of Exhortation, and a Sound of glad Tidings to all the Mourners in Germany, and the parts adjacent.*" *No date.*—12 *pages.*

This is an affectionate and practical address to the converts in Germany, &c. amongst whom the Writer so often laboured.

He thus presses upon them the necessity of Christians abstaining from all sin.

"Now God hath appointed the death of every sin and lust that liveth in your souls, and hath appointed his Son Christ Jesus to be the killer and destroyer thereof. And He cometh to the earthly parts, not with peace, but with a sword; and when ye feel it cutting off your pleasures, your delights, your worldly friendships and fellowships, yea, your hope and confidence, which stood on a sinful ground, or a ground where sin also stood, you must not be offended thereat, but wait in humility to feel that you are the slain of the Lord, which the prophet said should be many, in his great and notable day. And fear not, for He that kills you to what is old, shall raise

you up in the new life of righteousness, that never waxeth old.

"For as it ariseth in the particular, to rule the whole man in the fear and pure wisdom of God, that man ceaseth to act of himself, or speak of himself, and is brought to wait upon the good Spirit of God, to know what to do and say, as the hand-maid upon the hand of her mistress. And such the pure Spirit keeps in a pure conversation without sin, for no man by the Spirit of God is led into sin. And if any come to live in this pure, sinless conversation, this differs from the sinful world, and so shines over the world, and brings a night upon their glory; for this shining and beauty of holiness, is answered by the measure of the grace of God in all consciences where it shines: and so, many come to be gathered to the brightness of the arising of this righteousness, and become subject to the love of it. And so shall the borders of its garment be daily enlarged; and the borders of the possession of the wicked one shall be daily lessened; and the seed of God shall possess the gates of his enemies, according to his promise of old made by his holy prophets.

"And now, Friends, consider the place where this alteration is to be wrought, where the kingdom of the man of sin is to be destroyed, and where the kingdom of Christ is to be set up. It is within you that this great change is to be wrought; and a great power must be felt to work it; for, in this case, in vain is the help of man, without the Power of God. Therefore that which leads to the knowledge of the power, you must come to love and to obey, which is the Light of Jesus Christ in your consciences, wherewith Christ Jesus, the free gift of the Father, hath enlightened every one that cometh into the world; which Light doth discover to the soul, when the dark power doth begin to stir and operate, to lead into evil. And those that love the Light better than their lusts, they come to take up the cross to the lust, whatsoever it may be; and, standing faithful in the cross and denial of themselves, they come to witness what the apostle said: *The cross of Christ is the Power of God, through faith, unto salvation.*

"And then when this cross is thus taken up, and self thus denied; then that soul is not without the Power of God, which is the ground of their faith. And the more they are herein

subjected, the more power they have, and the more doth their faith increase; and, being obedient to the light of Jesus, the faithful and true Witness of God, they feel peace and encouragement; and a living hope doth sustain such as cast an anchor, till God makes a perfect work on their hearts. And here will arise the great difference between your hope and the hope of the hypocritical world: they hope to be set free from the condemnation due upon sin; but you will hope and wait to be set free from sin itself, which is the cause of condemnation, and to be redeemed out of evil, into the life of innocency, that was before sin was."

No. 11. "*An Epistle from S. Crisp, to Friends in Colchester.*" *No date.—4 pages.*

This is an earnest exhortation to his Friends, to keep steadfast to their principles.

No. 12. "*An Answer of S. Crisp to T. Loddington.*" *No date.—9 pages.*

This tract appears to have been written in reply to some remarks of the person to whom it is addressed, in conversations or letters which had passed between them.

S. Crisp thus expresses himself on some important points of doctrine:

"I never said faith was a thing separate from reason; that is but thy own false suggestion; for we do desire that all who have received of the like precious faith with us, may be ready to give a reason of it to him that asks it, as I shall be ready to do to thee or any man, when asked thereof. In the mean time, this is my testimony, that as man stands in the fall, simply considered, as a vassal and servant of the wicked one; in that state, his reason, will, and understandings, are all corrupted; and his affections are vile, and he an enemy to God and Christ;—and, in that state, he cannot see or understand the way of salvation, nor the true reason of it, nor perceive how it is according to the nature of God; but, with that reason, judgment, and

will, he will strike at the appearance of the true way of salvation, as the wise of this world ever did; and as thou, according to the hardness of thy heart, art still doing. But the light hath always broken forth another way, than their reason hath taught them to expect, and so they were left in darkness, still groping for the way, and changing and turning this way and that way, while others entered into the kingdom, and they were shut out; which is very near to be thy portion.

"Wherefore, friend, we say, that before the way of the Lord can be acceptable to a man, that is, before a man can receive that measure of faith which God hath offered unto all men, in that He hath raised up Jesus from the dead, he must know that of God in Him, to enlighten or clear his understanding, and to rectify his reason, and reduce it from the dark grossness in which he hath been ready to call evil good, and good evil; and yet used his reason, as it was, to maintain this his opinion. And as this enlightening principle of God is known to work in him, and he is giving up his will and judgment unto the manifestation of the Light, then his reason comes to be rectified, or reduced to its origi

nal principle of pure equity, in which he seeth that his reasonable sacrifice and service to God, is to give up all that he hath to the Lord; and thereupon he comes to wait for the gift of his Spirit, to order him and his affairs, that now he may live to God, and not to himself any longer.

"And when he comes to feel the gift of God's Holy Spirit, working upon his spirit, then thereby he hath a right understanding of his duty, and believes that to be the will of God; and, so believing, this belief or faith working in him by love, he becomes obedient: and this kind of faith, though it be separate from the corrupt reason of the world, that lies in wickedness, yet is not separate from the reason of an enlightened understanding, which, through faith, doth receive a perfect evidence of things which are not seen, and the substance of things that are hoped for."

"And whereas thou hast fallaciously insinuated in thy paper, that I had denied the Ascension of Christ, the Resurrection of the dead, General Judgment; these I turn back again as falsehoods upon thy own head: some of which are also wilful, because I testified so

far as I was required unto these things; especially unto that about the Resurrection: to which I said, I did believe, that all both good and evil, must have, or know, a day of resurrection. But if thou wilt not be satisfied with a Scripture-like confession, but wilt be still pressing to know with what body the dead should rise; then I say, concerning thy carnal imagination of a body: Thou sowest not now, that which shall be; what body shall be, shall be as pleaseth God; and none knoweth what that is, but He who knows the seeds that must receive their own bodies from God. Go learn what that means.

"And as to a General Judgment, I did express my mind, that God had appointed a day in which He would judge the world by the man Christ Jesus; whom He hath made the Judge both of the quick and dead; and I warned thee to take heed, that, in that day, thou mightest have a name and a place among the righteous: and now I do again exhort thee to believe the least appearance of his Light that now is, as well as is to come; for it is by the Light that the works of darkness shall be judged in that day, and so are they now; and this judgment of the Light the righ-

teous love; but the wicked and the rebellious come not to it, but reject it."

No. 13. "*An Epistle from S. Crisp to Friends.*" *no date.*—6 *pages.*

This tract marks the continuance of that Gospel love for the Church, and care over it, for which the writer was so remarkable. It is written in a fervid style, and with a sort of apostolical authority. It directs that copies of it be fairly written, and sent forth among Friends in the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire, to be read in their meetings. It thus concludes:

"And this further, brethren, is in my heart to signify unto you, that your joy may be full, that, since my coming southward, I have seen the prosperity of truth; and the people that God hath made willing, in this the day of his power, are many. Glory be to the Lord God of Zion, who turneth her captivity, and restoreth again her inhabitants from far! And Truth hath a good savour in these parts; and Friends are kept fresh and living; and many

in a readiness to go out in the Lamb's warfare, to overcome violence with patience, and the force of the enemy with faith, and to wait for their saving through suffering; and they feel the Rock that upholds, and the Anchor that stays their souls, which hath never failed us, nor ever will; but will last until adversity cease, and tribulation come to an end, and sorrows be no more; yea, until the kingdom of our Lord be over all the kingdoms of the earth, and his Name over every name, in which is your strength, and the strength of your dear friend and brother, in the kingdom, life, and patience of the Lamb, and holy seed."

No. 14. *John Furley's Translation of two of S. Crisp's Epistles, in Dutch, to Friends at Amsterdam.*" 1667.—5 *pages.*

These are Epistles of general exhortation, and are directed to be read in the meetings.

No. 15. "*An Epistle of S. Crisp to Friends against such as cry out against the Form of Godliness, as against meeting at set times, on First days, &c.*" *No date.*—6 *pages. Placed in the Works between* 1669 *and* 1672.

The schism which prevailed in the Society about this time and to which this letter alludes, was for a time the source of great uneasiness; and few persons laboured more earnestly by word and by letter to stop its baneful progress, than S. Crisp. In this Epistle, he contents himself with reminding friends of the concord, love, and peace, which had been felt amongst them, whilst they continued to be humble followers of the Truth.

Towards the conclusion of the letter, he thus expresses himself.

"Dear friends, the Lord knows the integrity of my soul, and true love to you; and that for his glorious truth's sake, and for your sakes, I write these things to you. O! receive my advice, hearken and hear, and let all self-willedness be borne down by the meek Lamb's power, for it is that which gives life, and restores, and heals and makes up breaches."

"Therefore lend not your ears, I beseech you, unto that in any, or in yourselves, that would, under pretence of formality in times and places, draw you aside from the good and blessed testimony of assembling yourselves together, to wait upon your God. And what there is in any of you, that would not condescend unto each other as brethren, is not of the nature of the true birth; but must by it be subdued. And as that ariseth and prevails in and among you, so will you again feel the Lord ministering to his own in you; and your eyes will be open to see the wiles of our subtle adversary more clearly, though he may appear masked, with a show of more holiness, with a promise of a further glory, higher dispensations, new discoveries, yea, and with a pretence of leading out of formality into the power; and many such like baits and snares. My dearly beloved, beware of such pretences, for he comes but to bring you into a disesteem of what you have received, and to draw forth the expectation after something else; that so you might be robbed and spoiled of your portion; and then, when you come to a want in yourselves, having lost the former, and missing the latter, you will be tempted to end in the earth; and the latter end of such is worst of all."

No. 16. "*An Alarm sounded in the Borders of Spiritual Egypt.*" 1672.—*34 pages.*

The great object of this work, which may, I think, be considered as the principal work of the author, is to support the doctrine of the possibility and duty of Christians abstaining from sin. The holding of this doctrine by the Society, appears to have been the occasion of much opposition, from many of the ministers of religion of that day. Crisp considered the views of his opponents as an apology for sin—as lowering the standard of Christian requirements, to the practice of those who wished to be, at the same time, of the world and of Christ—to serve *God* and *Mammon*. He and his friends held the necessity of an entire devotion to religion. Every thing with them was to be made subservient to the one great end; and this in the strictest sense. They allowed no considerations of expediency to modify their rule or qualify their obedience —they believed that those who were thus devoted to God, were under the sensible guidance of his Spirit, and were thus led into an entire conformity to his will. They held, however, that this entire conformity did not require an abandonment of the world; but that the

world was the allotted scene of Christian conflict. They were aware, that to support this state, required a constant watchfulness.—And as they attributed every good thought, and the power for every good word and work, to the operation of the Divine Spirit, no persons were more free from boasting of their performances, or more sensible of the great Scriptural truth, that OF THEMSELVES THEY COULD DO NOTHING—that to *them*, as men, belonged indeed blushing and confusion of face; and that it was on *Grace*, and not on *Works*, that their hopes for salvation rested; even on that Grace by which the blood of Jesus was shed for sinners—by which He ever liveth to make intercession for us—and by which the Holy Spirit is given, to guide us into good and acceptable works, to strengthen us to perform them, and to console us under temptations and trials.

They held that a principal object of the coming of Christ, was to redeem man from the power of sin in this life; and so to restore him to the image of God, which had been lost by the Fall. They thought that the important Scripture doctrine of the purifying operation of Christ's Spirit on the heart, was

too generally neglected, and that many were resting in the outward Sacrifice of Christ, without experiencing that washing and sanctification, of which the apostle speaks in writing to the Corinthians, and without which, under the figure of *being born again*, our Saviour expressly declares, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. They held that those who had thus "put off the old man with his deeds, and had put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him who created him," were in a state acceptable to God through Jesus Christ; that this state of acceptableness might be continued in, and all sin resisted through the aid of the Holy Spirit, whilst man continued watchful. Nevertheless, they admitted that this state of abstinence from sin, was compatible with the liability to fall, and also with a growth in the knowledge and love of God;—that there was the state of a *child*, as well as that of the full stature of the *man*, in Christ Jesus. Yet, so long as obedience kept pace with knowledge, they held the state to be acceptable, and in one sense perfect; as an infant may be said to be *perfect*, though the powers of the future man are *imperfectly* developed; and, as we speak

of a man, restored from disease to health, as being *well*, although he is liable to future attacks of disease. It is, I apprehend, in this double sense of the word perfect, that the apostle Paul, viewing the amazing extent of the Christian science, if I may so speak, declares himself *not to have attained or to be already perfect;* and yet, in the same letter, and almost immediately after, applies the term *perfect* to himself and some of those whom he is addressing. "Let us therefore," he says, "as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

Yet I think it is easy to see how good persons, *practically* agreeing in their views of what Christianity requires from its disciples, may be ranged on the opposite sides, in the speculative dispute about Christian perfection.

Many differ on *terms* who agree in *things;* and whether a state in which we have still to struggle with manifold temptations, deserves the appellation of *perfect*, leaves abundant room for discussion. It must however be remembered, that the *perfection* of human beings, is not the same as that of the higher order of

created intelligences—much less is it the same as that of the Creator of all.

Paul says, "There are bodies terrestrial, and bodies celestial; and the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." On the same authority we learn, that whilst in this terrestrial body, we groan and are burdened—the spirit must struggle with the flesh;—and the life of the true Christian is aptly spoken of as a continual warfare. Christian perfection therefore consists in supporting this warfare, and in the devotion of "body, soul, and spirit" to obtain its glorious consummation.

If there are any pious persons who cannot reconcile the views taken of the subject in the succeeding tract, with that state of humility which the highest Christian will feel the most deeply, I would beg him not to be offended by the severity with which our author treats those, who contend for the impossibility of deliverance from sin in this life. It was not a difference in *terms* about which his zeal was kindled, but it was against that laxity of Christian principle, which would

bring down the high standard of the morality of the Gospel, to that of worldly convenience; or would substitute, for the spirituality of the Divine requirements, the forms and ceremonies of an external ritual.

I shall present the reader with considerable extracts from this work, as serving to illustrate the character and tenets of the author, and as containing the most forcible arguments for that view of the subject which he took, and urged as the doctrine of the Society of Friends.

The following passages are taken from the opening of the Book.

"Many are the devices of Satan, and great is the subtilty which he furnishes his children and servants withal, by which he seeks to uphold his kingdom, pleading now a right to that which he got by subtilty; and has taught his whole family, that it is impossible for any to be freed from under his service; even as if all men that are created of God, were created to the service of the devil: and, although he can make no man, yet that he is able, after they are made, to keep them in his

service: yea, although their Maker does call for them to serve Him: and so, by this supposed necessity, which is a doctrine well-pleasing to the flesh, he keeps nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, in bondage to his will."

"Certainly, there is no manner of slaves so well contented with their bondage, as Satan's are; and therefore it is worth the considering, what right he has to reign over mankind, and what work it is he gives his servants to do, that is so well-pleasing unto them, that they cannot endure to hear of being set at liberty, as long as they have a day to live. As for my part, I have considered what right Satan can claim to the government which he has among the children of men, reigning over kings and princes, priests and people, from one sect to another, setting them all to work in blind zeal one against another; yet all agreeing in this one question, to wit, Is there any man or woman upon the earth, that is set free from under the reign of Satan, that he can live without sin? or is it possible for any to be so? The general answer is: No; we are all, and must be all his servants, all the days of our lives. But some might say: Seeing

you are all fellow-servants, and that both you and your work do belong to one master; why then are you disagreeing with one another about the work? But O! my soul longeth that some might be awakened, once to consider, and to bethink themselves, how they came to this state and condition, and by what right and authority their master keeps them in this bondage, and whether it is not both lawful and possible to come from under it."

"It would go beyond my present aim and purpose, to trace this spirit, who is called the Devil and Satan, the Dragon and Old Serpent, through all ages since the beginning, to see with how little truth, right, or equity, he came up to reign among men. The understanding reader of the Scriptures of Truth can see it clear enough; and it is a great wonder, and one of the greatest that is in that part of the world called Christendom, that there are so many men, being men of knowledge in other matters, and such as set up the Scriptures so much as they seem to do, calling them the Word of God, the Rule of Christians, the Light of the World, the Guide of Life, &c. who go with such a book in their hands, pleading for

Satan's kingdom, and for a necessity that it must continue as long as there is a man upon earth: whereas the Scripture, in substance, is nothing else but as a declaration against him and his government, and sheweth how he ought to be forsaken, opposed, resisted, and cast out; and withal, how that primitive, pure, and holy, and righteous law of that Spirit, which is called God, and is holy, pure, and blessed for ever, ought to be embraced, received, and exalted in the whole creation.

"I say, this is a very great wonder, of which, and of the consequences whereof, the Christians, so called, have cause to be ashamed; yea, are a reproach to the whole world: and it is high time that some do arise for God; and the call is gone forth: 'Who is on the Lord's part?' *Exod.* xxxii. 26. Satan has an innumerable host to plead for sin, some with arguments, and some with cruel weapons; but who is on the Lord's part, that can say: The Lord reigns in righteousness; and in truth He judges the earth.

"O! all ye carnal professors of God and Christ, in words, but who in works deny Him,

and say, that sin must stand and remain as long as you live! be it known unto you, in the Name of the God of Heaven, that where sin remains, there Satan is prince and ruler. And if that must remain as long as you live, Satan desires it no longer; for he that will be his servant in this life, must be his companion in the world to come."

The author proceeds to notice several principal reasons or apologies, urged by those who opposed the doctrine of perfection.

"First, they say, *That sin is rooted and planted in the nature of man; yea, so that a man must cease to be a man, before he can come to cease from being a sinner.*

"*Answ.* That man in his natural state is so united with sin, as that he thereby is separated from God, I do not deny; and also that there is a natural inclination in man to commit sin, is also true; to wit, as long as they remain in their natural state and condition."

"Now, the manner how the nature of man came to be corrupted, you have heard was

by man's joining with that spirit that was fallen and cast out from God, and had only a power in the darkness, and could not reign over any thing, but over that which he could draw from the glory of God into the darkness. And God, who dwells in the Light, being moved with infinite compassion, sent his Eternal Son, who was with Him before the world was, that He should be made partaker of the same nature in which man was created; that by the virtue of the eternal power, He might restore him unto God, and might minister unto the spirits of all such, to whom this darkness and corrupted state was a prison-house. And this Jesus received not the nature of angels; that was not his work; but He received the seed of Abraham, which was in captivity, that He might redeem it from captivity through death; suffering under the weight of that which oppressed the creature, and caused it to groan after redemption: so that, although it could not deliver itself, yet it might come to be delivered through faith in Him, who is mighty to save.

"And this Jesus, who was of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, purifieth the nature

of all those that join with Him: for the work of Satan is to bring in corruption; and the work of Christ is to destroy it, and instead thereof, to bring in everlasting righteousness. Now, where sin is remaining in the nature, there the covenant with hell and death is not broken, neither are such in covenant with God; but are yet under the power of the prince of the air, whatever they may profess. And the death of Christ is yet of no value unto them, because they are yet in their sin and corrupted nature, unchanged, untranslated: so that those that hold this plea for Satan, *That because he once got a place in the nature of man, and has corrupted it, therefore sin must remain, so long as the life or nature remains;* such are strangers to the work of God, and to his power, by which He worketh, and also to Christ Jesus, through whom He works. And they have more faith in the power of Satan, than in the power of Christ, believing that Satan is more able to keep the creature, and to hold fast that which, by deceit and treachery, he has gotten in it; than God, who made the creature good in his nature, is able to restore it to his first purity, that the creature might come to serve Him in righteousness and holiness.

"And such as so believe, are no true Christians, nor true believers: but are standing in the corrupt nature, that has unity with Satan, and plead his cause; who is willing that his corrupt birth should live in man, as long as he lives in the world: for he knows, that so long no acceptable sacrifice can be offered up to God; for you cannot bring forth a clean sacrifice out of an unclean vessel; and as long as nature is defiled, the works will be unclean that are wrought in that nature."

The second objection which the author notices, is, "*That never any man was freed from sin, ever since sin first entered into the world; and that therefore it is presumption to expect such a thing in this life.*

"*Answ.* If this position were true, that there was never any man freed from sin, yet it would be presumption to say, that God should not be able to do that which He never did; and it is also presumption to conclude, that never any man was freed. But if this position be false, then not only the consequence is false, to wit, that none can be freed; but also the argument itself is proved to be a lie, and

so is swept away, and a door is opened unto all, that have more love to righteousness than to sin, both to hope and to expect, that the same work should again be wrought in and for them, without presumption. Now, that all men are sinners by nature, is evident; and that some were changed out of that natural state, is as evident; so that the question is only, Whether those that are translated out of that sinful nature, remain sinful, yea or nay. Which if they do, what advantage have they beyond others, if they, after they are translated, must remain unfreed? But I answer with the words of the apostle, 1 *Peter* iv. 1. 'He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin.' And here he spoke of such as were yet in the body, but had suffered with, and were made partakers of the sufferings and death of Christ, by a dying to sin; through which every one must pass, before he can come to the resurrection that is in Christ; by which, said Peter, *They obtained the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God;* which he calls the *baptism that saves.* Now, some having been partakers of that death, baptism, and resurrection of Christ, by which they came to cease from sin, and to have an answer

of a good conscience, without offence both to God and man, which none that sin can have, then may there some lawfully expect to come to the enjoyment of the same state of freedom and clearness, as well now as formerly, without presumption.

"*Secondly*, I answer with the words of the apostle John, 1 *John* iii. 9. 'He that is born of God sinneth not, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.' Now, whereas there have been some that were born of God, and have been his children, and they that were so, had overcome the wicked one, so that he could not touch them, but they had kept their garments white and unspotted; and whereas some have been freed from the law of sin and death; and that some have walked unblameably and without spot; and have put off the old man with his deeds, and known the new birth, and could by the Holy Spirit call God Father; which things are all manifest in the Scriptures of Truth, which none can deny but those that will deny the Scripture:—why then should any man question that the same works of redemption, should not now again be brought to pass?

And therefore it is lawful to expect it without presumption. This argument being confuted by the experience of the saints."

"Further, let us consider what these strong pleaders for sin have to fortify themselves withal; they say, *they have the Scripture to plead withal for sin*, which certainly was never the intention of the Holy Spirit, by which it was given forth. But, say they, it is written in 1 *Kings* viii. 46. 'For there is no man that sinneth not.'

"*Answ.* This is very true, neither do I plead, that any man is free from sin all the days of his life, (except Christ,) but have confessed they are all sinners by nature, until they be changed; and besides, there it is but spoken of a people that were under the law, of which the apostle says, that it made nothing perfect; but, said he, the bringing in of a better hope did: but the Law did not purify the comers thereunto, according to the conscience; but when the offerers had offered, there remained an evidence of sin in the conscience; but what is that to the Christians, who are come to know a better hope, and the

blood that purifieth the conscience? For the same apostle that said, the Law made no man perfect, (under which Law Solomon was, as also that people concerning whom it was said, there is none that lives and sinneth not,) this same apostle notwithstanding said, that it was the bringing in of a better hope that did it. And what! are these fighters for sin, and sin-pleaders become so zealous, that they will rather deny the better hope, than cease from sin? If not, then there is a possibility to be made perfect by the blood of Christ, which the blood of bulls and goats could not do.

"Another objection is brought forth, that is, *That the apostle Paul said, that sin lived in him, and that the good that he would do, he did not; and the evil that he would not do, that he did.*

"*Answer.* That Paul knew the passing through such a state, is without question, and is not denied; but this does not prove at all, that he never knew a better state; or that he never came to perfection: for in that place he makes mention of three states. *First*, how it was with him, when he lived without the

Law of God, in his liberty to fight against the Truth; and he thought he might do many things against the Name of Jesus. *Secondly*, He declares of his convincement, and how it was with him then, when he knew he should not do any more against the Truth; and yet, not being wholly changed, he did things which he knew he ought not, by reason of sin living and dwelling in him; and that state he did not call happy or blessed; (as these blind professors do at this day, that take up a rest in this state, and say, they can never be redeemed out of it;) for he, speaking of such a condition, cries out for deliverance, calling it a miserable condition; which plainly sheweth, that his eye was upon a further and better state, unto which he also beareth witness; saying, he was made free by the law of the Spirit of Life, both from the law of sin and of death; in which time he was yet in the body.

"Now what reason have these pleaders for sin to believe, that Paul was in all these three states at once? and if not, why not in the last? seeing the other two are but foregoing States, leading to the third; especially considering the many other testimonies which he gives of

his being perfect, and of those that by his ministry were brought to perfection; saying, concerning himself, Timothy, and Sylvanus: *We can do nothing against the Truth.* And in another place he testifies, *That he has fought a good fight, kept the Faith, and finished his course.* Now, if it was finished, then there was no more to run; and if the fight was fought, then the enemies were no more alive, as they were when sin lived and dwelled in him. Again he says, in another place, *We preach wisdom among them that are perfect.* That is, after the explication and sense of these sin-pleaders—We preach wisdom among none, except among those that are already departed out of this world, and gone to heaven!

"And again, *As many of you as are perfect, be so minded.* That is to say, after their explication—Let none be thus minded, before they be dead! Again at last, *Dear Brethren, be perfect, and of one mind, &c.* But this, they say, cannot be in this life. And again he says to the Hebrews, *You are come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God the Righteous Judge of all, &c.* But where were these Hebrews? were they yetalive, or were

they dead? If dead, how came his epistle to meet them ?"

"Another pleading is of that which is spoken by the apostle, 1 *John*, i. 8. *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.*"

"It ought to be well observed, that John speaks there of a sort of men that were not yet brought to confess their sins: and if such came to that conceit and pride, as to say they had no sins to confess, and so exalted themselves above the witness of God that reproved them, then such deceived themselves. But if these that are so sinful, come to own that which brings them to a confession of their sins, then God is faithful to forgive such their sins, and to cleanse them from all iniquity. Now, when this is done, to wit, when the creature has confessed his sin, and God has forgiven it, and cleansed him, what must then that man say? Must he then say, that he has his sin still, when he has it not? Must he say, that he is filthy and defiled, when he is cleansed from all that? This would be a lie; and if he should be cleansed from all sin, he must certainly be cleansed from lies; and if it was his duty to

confess the work of the devil, when it was standing in him, which were his sins, may not he now, being cleansed, confess God's work, that He has cleansed him, he being cleansed by Him freely?

"Must he therefore be cried out of for a deceiver and heretic? Who is so blind that he cannot see, that it is as serviceable as needful, and as lawful for a man that has known the power of God to cleanse him, to confess that, and to bear a testimony to that work, as it is needful and lawful, when the devil's work is manifested in him, to confess that—to bear a testimony against that?

"Yet, saith John to those that were thus washed, *If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar.* It is as much as if he would say, That even those that are saved, must confess to the power of God, by which they have been judged for sin; and not to exalt themselves above it, as if they had never sinned, seeing that the witness of God testifieth in all, that they have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. So that now the understanding reader may see, that John hath not written here of an impossibility of being delivered from

sin, but absolutely the contrary; namely, that those that cannot say that they are without sin, may come, by confessing their sins, to be cleansed and made free from it; yea, from all that which is unrighteous. Yet some will say, that the apostle in that place useth the word *we*, as if he included himself; as if he would say at that time, *If I should say, that I had no sin, &c.*

"*Answer.* This is no proof at all, because the contrary is proved before, to wit, that he had fellowship with God and Christ; which no man could have, that walked not in the light, as He is in the light; and such may as well, by the same manner of speaking, prove James to be a curser; whereas he said, *With the tongue we bless God, and with it we curse men, that are made after the image of God.* And many more such instances might be brought forth, of the lamentations and complaints of the prophets concerning the House of Israel, which are translated so, in that manner of speaking; which does not prove at all, that the prophets were guilty of such sin and rebellion, of which they complained. *Neh.* ix. 37, &c."

"So having answered their chief objections, which they draw out of the Scripture, by which they endeavour to prove, *That none can be free from sin in this life*, contrary to *Rom.* vi. 22; I make haste to the third great argument of these captives, which they lay down against their own freedom.

"*Thirdly.* That is, *That it is the will of God, to let some sins remain in the best of his people, to keep them humble thereby.*

"*Answer.* If it be the will of God, that his best servants should sin, then his will is done when they sin. And what reason have any men to be humbled and cast down, because they have done the will of God? but rather rejoice and be glad that the will of God is done, and that their will is conformable to the will of God—that the will of both can be done together. This is a very easy way to the joy of the Lord, if this brings to that sentence, *Well done, good and faithful Servant, &c.* But woe unto those that are given up to believe this lie.

"But let these sin-pleaders but suppose, that if God should stretch forth his power so

far in man, that it should destroy all the works of the devil, and cast out sin; and cause his soul to take as great delight and joy in well-doing, as ever it had in sin; and should plant humility as naturally in the soul, as the devil has planted pride in it—

"Then the question is, *Whether this Power that works this change, be not as able to keep the creature in this condition, as to bring him to it without any help of the devil or his works?*

But they will say, *To suppose a thing that is impossible, is either against reason or presumption.*

I answer, All things are possible with God, except to lie; and as concerning this, it is not only possible, but the contrary is impossible, because God hath so often promised it, to make a perfect work, and to finish his work in all them that trust in Him. And for this end is Christ Jesus come, *That He might destroy the Devil and his works.* And in the parable He saith, *When He comes that is stronger, He shall bind the strong man, and spoil his goods, and cast him out.* This seems as if Christ, who is the Stronger, had no need of the devil, or his goods either, to keep his

people humble thereby. And the apostle said, that *they were kept by the Faith, through the Power of God, unto Salvation.*"

"But seeing you profess that faith is the gift of God, we may well say, it is able to cleanse the heart, and to give victory over the world, and also over the devil and sin; and then there is no need of sin to keep us humble. For if humility was a fruit of sin, it would not be so acceptable to God as it is; for the prophet says: *He giveth his grace to the humble, and dwelleth with such as are of a contrite and broken heart.*

"Again, if a few sins, yea, though they be but a remnant, can keep men humble, then a great deal of sin must needs make a man more humble. So then let us plentifully sin, that we may plentifully be humble. But God forbid, that such doctrine or such teachers should go unreproved; for they have exalted the work of the devil beyond the work of God. And it is because such teachers have been countenanced, that the people have been led into so much blindness, ignorance, and hardness of heart, and that people have wholly

lost the hope and expectation of a day of deliverance; and have taken up a rest in a sinful and slavish state."

"But blessed be the Lord God of heaven and earth for ever; for He hath brought forth his day of salvation, which many have longed after, and are longing, and are in travail that they might come to know it; to whom a sinful state is no resting place, but is unto them as a strange land, in which they cannot sing the songs of Sion; but still have Jerusalem in their remembrance, which is free-born from above, longing after the day of gathering, that the Lamb, and not the changeable priests and teachers, may be their Light and Leader. Unto such I say and testify, in the name of the Lord God of heaven, lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh; and deliverance shall come out of 'Sion, the city of our solemnity.' *Isaiah* xxxiii. 20. And a mighty voice shall be sounded forth from the holy mountain, from the Lord of Hosts; and those that hear it shall live, and the dead bones in the valleys shall be enlivened, and the joy of that day shall be greater than the joy of the harvest.

"Now, how and in what manner these things will be brought to pass, is a great dispute among many, that are yet seeking in the carnal wisdom to conceive and comprehend spiritual things; and so they come to be scattered and divided in their imaginations: and therefore, in the mean time, those that are become willing to sit down in quietness, in the Light of Christ Jesus, that sheweth every running out of the mind, they come to feel the pure fear of God to be planted in their hearts; so that they dare not think their own thoughts, nor speak their own words. And here is the beginning of the true wisdom, by which wisdom it is given unto them, to understand those things which they could not find out in all the time of their travail and pains in the fallen wisdom.

"And whilst they were hearkening after the different voices of men, they never could have a certainty; but now hearing Him by whom God speaketh, who is manifest within them, whom their ear is inclined unto within; they come to know certainly that which they know through the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who alone is able to reveal unto those that fear Him, the mysteries of God's king-

dom; and He shuts them up from the wise and prudent of this world.

"And therefore, you that desire to have an understanding of these things, come down from your high builded towers of knowledge and comprehension, and sit down in that pure Light, that brings a death upon the earthly wisdom; and become as fools, that you may be wise: and that wisdom that is so received, shall lead to know the number of the beast, which the whole world, with all their academical wisdom, and all the sects, with their inventions, are strangers unto at this day, and are carrying about with them his name, and the number of it, or his mark, by which they are accepted among men, and yet do not know what it is. But when they come to be wise enough to know it, and honest enough to forsake it, then they will see, that the friendship of this world comes to be broken, and the enmity to work against the holy seed; and the seed comes to arise and bruise the head of the enemy, and to nail it fast to a cross till it dies; and then comes freedom—then there is war no more—then there is peace on earth, and nothing but good-will towards all men, yea, to enemies. Then anguish and sorrow

flee away, and the perfect love of God casts out fear, and there is death no more; but that which is overcome by immortality. Blessed and happy are all they that come to know that state; and blessed are they that believe and wait to enjoy it; and blessed is that hope which leads thereunto."

The remainder of the Treatise relates to the duration of the reign of Satan among men, in which he endeavours to explain the prophecies of Daniel and John, still keeping in view the great object of his Treatise, viz. the doctrine of Redemption from sin in this life. Perhaps more may be learned from his brief view of the prophecies of Daniel and John, than from some more copious Commentaries.

He says: "There is yet one thing worthy to be considered, of which mention is made in the Scriptures of Truth; in which it appears, that in the beginning and setting up of the reign of Christ, when the everlasting Gospel was preached, and many thousands had believed and obeyed it, so that they came to be witnesses of the kingdom of Christ; and when Satan was cast out, dethroned, and put under their feet, and some were made priests and

kings to God—I say, after all these things, there came an apostasy from the faith, by which all these things afore-mentioned were brought forth; and of that apostasy Paul prophesied to the Thessalonians: and John by the Spirit saw, how that Satan should get a great dominion over men, by many changeable means and ways executing his power;" "and that the Almighty God had set and appointed a time, a certain time, to this dreadful, dark, changeable government, and had given John to know that it should last and continue but One Thousand, Two Hundred and Threescore days or years. And this is a set time, and hath its beginning, and its ending; but the kingdom of Christ, and also his Priesthood, are both after the power of an endless Life.

"Now, seeing that this last power which Satan has gotten, is but to continue his appointed time, why should any be his friend so far as to say, that it must continue always, and that it must never come to an end; and that people no ways can get freedom from under his tyrannical power."

"Come, take your books into your hands, and read the number of the years; it is called

1260 days; reckon after the reckoning of the ancients, 30 days to a month, and see whether that does not make out 42 months; and see whether 42 months do not make a Time, Times, and half a Time; and see what things are ordered to be in those different Times; and see whether you can find out the beginning of those Times, that so you may find the end of them: for all those that had their confidence in the number of the year 1666, are now confounded, ashamed, and their hope is frustrated. And now it is high time to wait upon the Lord, to get an understanding and knowledge which makes not ashamed.

"Now, the first thing to be considered, to the opening of this thing, is, that the first appearance against this man child, that was born in heaven by a woman that was clothed with the sun, and had her feet upon the moon, and was crowned with the stars—the first, I say, that appeared against this child, was a great red Dragon. Mark, this was no substitute under Satan, but was Satan himself; though he appeared in heaven, as you may see, *Rev.* xii. 13; and he it is that has given power to all those that have persecuted this woman, or her seed; but as long as he was in

heaven, he was no perfect persecutor; there he had no power, but only to be an accuser of the brethren, and therein he busied himself night and day. But by this it is evident, that there was a power over him, to which he accused them, and so long they could not sing: but when he was cast out with his angels, then they sang: *Now is salvation come, and power, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren that accused them day and night before our God, is cast down, &c.*

"But then wo unto them that dwell on earth, where Satan got his power, that is in the earthly ground. There he rules with great wrath, anger and fury, and indignation, persecuting the woman, and the least appearance of her seed; and because he cannot do harm enough of himself, he goes and makes for himself a substitute, to wit, a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Mark, just the number of his own heads and horns, only he came out of the pit, and this out of the sea or waters, of which waters you may read in *Rev.* xvii. 15, 'That they are peoples, tongues, languages, and nations;' and out of them came this strange beast, which Satan counted worthy to

have his perfect power, because he knew that he would do his work for him to purpose; and he received his power for the space of forty two months.

"His first work was to persecute the saints: Secondly, to set up the worship of the devil: Thirdly, to bring the dread of this seven-headed beast over the whole earth: Fourthly, to blaspheme the name of God and his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein: And, Fifthly, to make people believe, that there is no overcoming of his power. And these works are spread and carried on by three unclean spirits, which came forth out of the mouth of the *dragon, beast, and false prophet, over all kindreds, nations, tongues, and people; and there was none able to resist them, except those whose names were written in the book of the Life of the Lamb.* And concerning them, because they would not receive the *mark of the beast in their forehead or right hand,* they must be banished, and must not have liberty to buy or sell; and those that would worship nothing but a living substance, and not an image, though it was alive, those must be killed.

"And when that sort were all killed and banished, and the whole world brought, sometimes to worship the dragon, sometimes to worship the beast that had just so many heads and horns as the dragon himself; and then to worship a little beast with two horns, that came out of the earth; and then to worship the image of the old seven headed beast—when I say, that all things upon the whole earth were thus disposed, then was it as Satan would have it; for now had every one subjected himself unto his power, and received that name or mark, or the number of the substitute, and admired his great power; and set him up as the chief among men, whom none could overcome, except some few that had the Word of God itself, (for the other had the Scripture,) and durst seal their testimony against the dragon and false prophet with their blood.

"And because these were but a few, and were soon killed, they being dead, there was a joyful and merry world; Satan was well pleased, and they did send their gifts to one another abundantly; and those that had been most busy, and serviceable to kill the witnesses, (those that dared to speak of another

kingdom or dominion, besides that of the dragon and beast,) they had the greatest gifts. And in those days there was no prophesying, but in sack-cloth, and neither did that continue long; but the prophets were killed; and, being dead, their dead bodies were kept above the earth, and were more esteemed of than their living testimony was, for that plagued all the worshippers of the beast.

"So in such a time have the nations been so long, that they are so used to the power and reign of Satan, that they plead for it, as if he had an undoubted right thereto. And if Satan might speak himself, he would not desire of the world to rule any longer than the world alloweth him; for they have forgotten that it is but to continue forty two months, whilst the man child was caught up unto God, and whilst his mother was in the wilderness; and also, that it was to be expected, that both should appear again in their appointed time.

"But whilst it was thus with the world, viz. *That the true Church was not to be found upon earth, but was fled away, as upon eagles' wings; and that He that ought to rule over*

all, was caught up into heaven; and that the devil was in his place, the old serpent ruling and giving his power to whom he pleased, to a great beast, or little beast, or to a harlot, or to any thing like him; and whilst great and small, high and low, bond and free, did wonder at his power, and were ready to worship any one that had his power; let those whose eyes are open, but consider in what a lamentable state the miserable world then was, and whether that abomination that made the world desolate of God and all good order, was not then set up in the holy place, where it ought not. And was the world without a religion, or without a profession of God and Christ in those days? No: they bore a profession of Christ who is unchangeable, in all their changeable ways; and this was a time of gladness to many.

"And they who rejoiced at the man child being caught up to God, had many sorts of religions; and when they came to be weary with one, Satan furnished them with another. And when they had been exercised a long time in the aforesaid worships of the dragon, the seven headed beast, the little beast, and of the living image, then there came forth yet

a deeper mystery of iniquity than before, the mother of all these abominations: she shewed herself not as a despised harlot, but as a queen, decked with scarlet, purple, and precious stones. And that very beast, which none could overcome, but which the whole world had wondered after, he himself must be under her command, and must carry her up and down upon the waters, which are peoples, lands, tongues, and languages. And this harlot hath another design upon the poor blind world. Mark—she comes with a preparation to make all drunk, that they might not make use of their senses, to bethink themselves where they were; and that they might not have any suspicion against any thing, she furnishes herself with a golden cup, which there was none that had any thing against it, but every one could well receive it.

"And this was but to deceive them; for any potsherd of the dunghill had been good enough, to drink that out of, which she had to give them. But she must give her drink to kings and princes, and nobles and captains, and merchants, and to all sorts of men. So she proffered them her cup, and they have all drunk."

"They were drunk of abominations, and the harlot was drunk of the blood of the saints and witnesses of Jesus; and yet the name of Jesus was still professed upon earth. His name was not persecuted; but those were persecuted, that witnessed Jesus himself who takes away sin. Such were persecuted; for she could not endure to hear, that sin, which is an abomination to the Lord, should be taken away, and that men should live without sin, and be perfect; for if so, then she must be childless, and as a widow, and must lose her high place on the top of the beast; and then men would not be so drunk of her cup, and that would not tend to her advantage. Therefore if any came to be witnesses of Jesus himself, she drank the blood of such; but if they would be content to drink her cup, and so would please themselves with good and precious words, and in the mean time drink in her abominations, then they might live and flourish as long as she flourished.

"But, alas! what do you think, who read with understanding, was the state of the world in those days? Was it not high time that plagues, indignation, and vengeance should be poured out upon this bloody harlot, and upon

the seat of the beast upon which she did ride, and upon the whole earth, which had committed fornication with her? Is it not high time that the carpenters should come, *Zach.* i. 20, to cut off these horns? for at that time the power of darkness was spread over all, and the will of Satan was done, and his one thousand two hundred and sixty years were prosperous to his kingdom, and he did what he pleased. And if any spoke against him, and against his kingdom, he would have them killed, and then his harlot would drink the blood of such. And there was none left, neither great nor small, neither bond nor free, high nor low, neither young nor old, but had submitted themselves all of them, and said: *Who is like him? None are able to overcome him.—It is impossible to be made free from under his power.—He must reign as long as we live.—It is possible for us* (cry they) *to overcome princes, kingdoms, and armies; and therefore we go out and fight valiantly, and many times we get victory, and become conquerors; but to overcome sin, which Satan has set up in us, that is impossible; and therefore it is vain to trouble ourselves about it; and we will not do any thing concerning*

it, seeing we have drunk in a faith, that it is impossible to perform or accomplish it.

"And thus has the whole world been bewitched, in the time when Satan has reigned. And will he and his servants make us believe, that it must continue so always? though never any other time was given him, but such as was limited; and, in the end of that time, we understand there is a great alteration to come to pass; to wit, *That the Church, the true woman, must come out of the wilderness again; —the man child must come down again, and appear upon earth, and rule the nations with a rod of iron; and the harlot must be judged; —that sorrow, death, and famine must come upon her in one day; and that ten kings should agree together, to burn her flesh with fire; and that the smoke of her torments should ascend to heaven; and then must the dragon, the beast, and false prophet, that had still preached peace, though it was as abovesaid, they must all be taken, whilst they are yet alive in this work and in their power, and be cast into the lake of the wrath of God, which burneth for ever;—and these princes, and captains, and merchants, and inhabitants of*

the earth, must howl and lament because of this great alteration.

"And therefore, seeing that such a time is lawfully to be expected, in which Satan, the old serpent, may be thrust out of his dominion, and that then the time of joy and rejoicing will be for the upright, it is worth the spending of our labour and time, to find out that time; that so it may not come over us, and we see it not, and know it not, and so let it pass by, as the Jews did; and so be doting and waiting for it, as a thing which is yet to come, as they do at this day, when almost two thousand years are past, since the thing came to pass.

"Now, you know the Jews had a prophet, who told them the time when the Messiah should come, afo chand, to wit, Daniel, as you may see, *Dan.* ix. 24, &c. where he told them, that it was seventy weeks that were determined upon the people, and upon the city, and that the Holy One should be anointed. Now, this was not such a great mystery to them; they knew it was common to reckon a day for a year among the prophets; so that that time was but four hundred, fourscore and ten years

that the visions should be sealed, and the daily sacrifice taken away, the city be made desolate, and the anointing of the Holy One come to pass, and the Messiah be slain for the sins of the people. And since the time that the command was gone forth to build Jerusalem again, in which time the seventy weeks had their beginning, is above two thousand years. The city is since builded again, and also made again desolate, and the daily sacrifice taken away; and the Prince of the people that then came, viz. Titus Vespasianus, the Roman, has destroyed the Sanctuary; and the destruction of it was with an overflowing to the end of the war; and yet all these things cannot convince them, nor make them believe that the Messiah is come, or that it was He whom their forefathers have killed as a blasphemer.

"Now, that we, after such clear prophecies of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and dethroning of the devil, sin, and antichrist, should not come to be surprised with the same blindness and hardness of heart, let us have a strict observation of the times; that we may not fight against the appearance of Truth, and put it far away from us, and say: The days are not come yet, in which the pouring out of

the spirit can be witnessed; and that the knowledge of God must cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea; and that the Gospel must be preached again to those that dwell upon the earth; and that the Lamb and his saints must have the victory over the dragon and his angels. For, such as put the day so far from them, are in one and the same error with the Jews, and do not understand the times better than they do; and so are persecuting the true appearance of that which they seem to expect and to pray for, as the Jews did, because it does not appear in their way, to answer their carnal expectations, who despise the day of small things. But from such are the mysteries of the kingdom shut up, and are revealed unto those that fear the Lord.

"Now to understand these things, let every one come to read the prophecies in a measure of that Spirit by which they were given forth, and as that same opens the prophecies; for, without it, every one understands only according to his own fancy or private judgment. The apostle said, *There should come an Apostasy from the Faith;* that is, from the true Christian faith. Now, when was that? And who are they that are thus apostatised, or fallen

away? Ask the Pope, and the whole Roman Catholic Church, and they will tell you, that the prophecy points at Martin Luther, Zuinglius, O'Ecolampadius, Calvinus, Menno Simonis, and other heretics, that have rent many nations from the true apostolic faith, and the ancient Christian Church, the infallible foundation and pillar of Truth, &c.

"Ask the Bishops of England, and the Presbyters in Scotland, the Pfarherren or Pastors in Denmark or Sweden, and Predicants in the Low Countries, and they will tell you, that this prophecy signifieth the general apostasy from the apostolic faith and order in the Church of Christ, to the Pope and popish exercises and Institutions over all Christendom.

"Again, ask them, Who among themselves continue as yet in the true apostolical faith and religion? Then the Lutheran Pastors will say, that we are; and therefore, cry they, join with us. No, say the Bishops in England, we will prove, that the Apostolical Church had Bishops, and that the apostle said, *He that desires the office of a Bishop, he desires a good work;* and therefore we are they that are the true Church, according to the first in-

stitution. Then say the Presbyterians and Dutch Predicants, The Bishops in the primitive Churches were not such as you are, but such as we are, whose care was over the flock; and did teach and rule in ecclesiastical matters, but not in Councils and Parliaments, as you do; therefore you are fallen from the primitive state.

"And now at last what says Truth of these, and all others who deny that faith which purifies the heart, and can cleanse the conscience from sin, and can give victory over the world? This was the faith which Paul preached, that was nigh in the heart; and therefore all those that say, that the heart of a true believer cannot be made clean, that he cannot come to live without sin, nor to have a purified conscience; and all those that deny the word of faith in the heart, and Christ to be the rule, and set up another rule, and another faith, and another foundation for it than the apostle set up; all such are fallen from the faith, and are not apostolic, but antichristian. And when the man of sin comes to be revealed, they will come to be revealed with him, and fall with him, and with Babylon, the mother of

them all; and great will be their fall in that day.

"There is yet another prophecy of Christ, in which He said: *When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, where it ought not; then let him that is in Judea flee upon the mountain; let not him that is in the field, go back to fetch his clothes; nor he that is on the house top, come down to take any thing out of his house, &c. Mat.* xxiv. 15. And He further said, *Ver.* 23, 24. *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not, &c.* signifying plainly, that when the abomination of desolation should be set up, the people, notwithstanding, would not be wanting in divers sorts of teachers of the name of Christ.

"What were they made desolate of, by the setting up of this abomination, seeing they were not desolate of a profession of Christ in divers manners? They were desolate of the power and presence of God in all their holy places, (as they called them,) where this abomination was set up; even as Christ said to the Jews, when they had made the house of

prayer to be a den of thieves; then said He, *Your house is left unto you desolate.* Mark, it was not then desolate of people, of congregations, of religions, and worship; but it was desolate of the presence of God; for that was not to be found there. So that abomination which makes people desolate of the power of God, by which they should have power over their sins and lusts; and which makes the ministers and teachers desolate of the Spirit of God, by which they should have been led to preach the Gospel; this abomination has been set up a long time, and made the people and nations as a wilderness; and this has been since that time, that the Christian religion has been carried on and maintained by the traditions of men.

"*Then came the poison to be poured out into the Church;* and thereby it is come to be so swelled and big, that it can comprehend within it the tyrannical and persecuting Princes, proud and rebellious Bishops, wicked men-slayers and murderers, unclean, wanton, and drunken people; they have all room enough in it. And since that time it is counted heresy, that any should make a profession of being purified and cleansed; and from that

time it may be reckoned, that the abomination of desolation has been set up. And therefore let us consider how long it is yet to stand, before Satan comes to be cast out, and the temple of God be cleansed, and the filth of abomination be burned up, that the God of heaven may again delight in his sanctuary, and that the earth may not for ever be empty of his presence; but that He may be found of those that seek Him, and be heard of them that are mourning after Him.

"Now John saith, that this time of desolation, was to continue a time, times, and half a time; that is, three years and a half, or three times twelve months and six months; that is, forty two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days; which times are agreeing together in one, and do perfectly fulfil the time of the restoration of the Church, and of the coming of the Righteous Judge, whose right it is to rule over men; for to Him are the Gentiles given for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for a possession. And that time doth also perfectly fulfil the time of the power of the beast; for these times do all agree together; and as they had their beginning about one and the same time, they must also

have their end shortly after one another, because they are like one another.

"Now to find out the end of those times, the beginning must be first known. Now the daily sacrifice was taken away long before the abomination, that made the earth desolate, was set up; but from that time that both should be fulfilled, said the angel to Daniel, should there be one thousand, two hundred and ninety days, that is thirty more than John writes of. Now the abomination of desolation was not set up in the time of Christ; for said He, *When you shall see it set up, &c.* speaking as of a thing that was not yet come to pass; and the Apostle said: *There shall come an Apostasy from the Faith;* which shews that it was not yet come, neither did it come till several hundred years after; for the true Christians suffered many cruel and grievous deaths for the Christian faith; so that they did not fall away, but endured to the end, and were saved; and so long the earth was not desolate.

"But when that faith was lost, which did support in sufferings, and that the Christian religion, (which was the holy place,) came to

be corrupted by pride, covetousness, persecution and worldly pleasures, ease, and the delights and honours of this world; then the abomination was set up, that made the earth desolate.

"And reckon from that time, one thousand, two hundred and sixty years, and add to it these thirty years, of which the angel spoke to Daniel, *Dan.* xii. 11, and see whether we be not about the forty-five years, of which there is made mention in the 12th verse, where the angel having spoken of the one thousand, two hundred, ninety years, adds, *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and thirty-five days:* signifying plainly, that there must be a time of patience and waiting for the blessed restoration, which was promised; and that that time of waiting should continue from the one thousand, two hundred and ninety, till one thousand, three hundred and thirty-five, which are forty-five days or years; and then they are blessed that come thereunto.

"So he that hath wisdom, let him reckon; but this reckoning is not comprehended in arithmetic, or the art of reckoning; neither

can it be conceived by the wisdom of this world: but such as have the wisdom which cometh from God, they shall understand; and it is to such I write."

"And by what is here said, it sufficiently appears; first, that this intruder or usurper, called the Devil, Satan, Dragon, or Antichrist, has no right to rule and to reign over mankind, all the days of their life: Secondly, that his kingdom is a limited kingdom, and was not to continue for ever: Thirdly, that the limits of it have been revealed to several of the servants of God: Fourthly, that the appointed time of his governments is nigh come to an end: Fifthly, that there is a blessed day and time to be expected after the end of his reign: And sixthly, that none can come to enjoy that blessed time and blessedness, nor sing the song of joy and deliverance, but those that patiently wait upon the Lord in the days of tribulation; and have that hope to see the salvation which cometh out of Sion.

"And therefore for conclusion, I shall say this, that all those that feel themselves in bondage under this prince of darkness, in what

manner soever it be, and are not willing to remain so always ; let them but believe in Him that sheweth you your bondage, and wait in his pure light in your own consciences, which discovers darkness and the prince of it ; and then you will feel a hope to spring up in you, that you may be delivered, as I myself have felt. 1 *John*, iii. 3.

" This hope will lead to a daily washing and purifying, and to a daily crucifying and mortifying of thy earthly members. And as this hope comes to work in thee, it will bring thee to an experience of being delivered in some particular things, and that will strengthen thy hope of being delivered from more ; and so, at last a faith will arise in thee, perfectly and thoroughly to be made free from sin. And when thou art made partaker of this faith, then the greatest and strongest bond of Satan is broken ; for, through the unbelief of it, he keeps his kingdom in man and woman. And when this evil root of unbelief is taken away, then his kingdom comes soon to an end, and the government of Truth comes to be set up in thee ; and so there comes a change to be wrought in thee, both inwardly and outwardly ; and so comes his kingdom, who is

the intruder or usurper, to be lessened, first in thyself, and then thou comest to see that change in another; and so it goeth forward, from one to ten, and from ten to a thousand, and so forth, more and more, until the inheritance of the wicked comes to be wholly laid waste; till Truth and Righteousness, and the reign and government of Christ Jesus our Lord, come to be set up in the earth; which my soul longs and travails for.

"And so, I know, it is with many more, for whose sake this is written; and as a testimony against that proud and presumptuous generation of hypocrites, of what sort or name, or in what nation or kingdom soever they may be, who not only have subjected themselves unto this prince of darkness, and unto the power of him who is called the Devil and Satan, but who also pretend, that all mankind must do so, and continue so all their days, and that there is no remedy nor help against it; and so deny the power of God, and lead the people to trust in a lie. But the day of the Power of God is come, and the refuge of lies is swept away; and the deliverance and victory of the LAMB is known unto many; to *whom*, and to the everlasting God, by the

operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the redeemed, be sung everlasting praises, thanksgiving, renown, honour and glory, and dominion for ever."

A considerable Postscript is added to this Work, from which I make the following extract:

"Another great plea, which these sin-pleaders bring, is this: If people can come to perfection in this life, then they have no need of Christ to be their Saviour; as if the salvation by Christ, and a perfect and pure life, were inconsistent with one another. Ye fools and blind, know ye not that all good and perfect gifts come from the Lord, and that none can come to perfection, but by his gift? And if God be the giver, is it not then by grace? Where are works then? But these pleaders for sin, are as great strangers to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, as they are to perfection, otherwise they would see their ignorance. When Christ said to his disciples, *Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:* that is as much as to say, (according to the explanation of these people,) There is

your command; when that is done, you have no need of Me.

"And the apostle spoke *Wisdom among them that are perfect*, but not such wisdom, or rather foolishness, as this, to persuade them, that they had no need of Christ to be their Saviour because they were come to perfection; but, on the contrary, he said, that he could do all things; then he could be perfect; but not as of himself, but through Christ that enabled him. And those that come to a perfect state, they know that their salvation is not of their works, how good and pure soever they may be, but merely by grace, through Jesus Christ, and in that respect of these three following observations.

"*First*, That it was the appearance of Christ Jesus, who is the Power of God, that brought them off from their sin and imperfection; and that they have not left them off of themselves, but do own that it is the grace of God, as the apostle did, *Titus*, ii. 11, 12. *For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

So here you may see, that it is the appearance of the grace of God that leads to perfection; and this perfection is not yet a perfect salvation; for those that have it, may fall from it again, and so not be saved; but those that endure to the end shall be saved

"But, *Secondly*, it is Christ who is the preserver and keeper unto the end, of those that trust in Him; and the apostles testify, that those that were delivered from the corruption of this world, must know Him to be their keeper, who had gathered them out of the world; and therefore said *Jude* in his epistle, *ver.* 24. *Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, &c.* And Peter testifieth, 1 *Peter*, i. 5. *You are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.* And Paul testifieth, *That the keeping is by Jesus Christ. Phil.* iv. 7. So here you may see, that the bringing to the state of perfection, and the keeping from falling from it again, are both the work of Christ; and yet this is not a perfect salvation, for this does not put away the former sins.

"But, *Thirdly*, whoever comes to perfect salvation, he comes to know Christ to be an offering for sin, and to obtain reconciliation with God, and forgiveness of his former sins. For all the holy conversation and perfection of life, can be counted no more than his duty; and therefore he cannot obtain remission of one of his former sins. But those that confess their sins, and forsake them, such come to forgiveness by Jesus Christ, and come to know his blood cleansing them from all their former sins; and so they come to perfect salvation by grace; not by works, but by faith, that works in the love of God, unto obedience; without which, faith is but dead, and makes no man saved, but those that have this true faith and hope in them. *They purify themselves, as He is pure.* 1 *John*, iii. 3. And he that has not this hope, does not purify himself, neither does he believe that he can do it. And by this we know the true believers from the false; and by this sinners are made manifest, that cannot stand in the congregation of the righteous. *Psalm* i. 5.

"So now let all the pleaders for sin stop their mouths for ever, and let Satan stand for himself, and plead his own cause; and hence-

forth do not despise and revile the innocent, that are travailing and striving after perfection with a faith to obtain it, as if they think to be saved by their own works; for we hope for no other salvation, than that which is in and by Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, who is the first-born of every creature, who brings many sons and daughters unto glory, but not by leaving them in their sins; for his name is Jesus, and He *saves people* FROM *their sins.*"

No. 17. "*An Address to the Magistrates of Groninghen.*" *Date uncertain.—4 pages.*

This is a Christian persuasive against the persecution which prevailed at Groninghen, against those who professed the principles of Friends. It thus expostulates with the Magistrates.

"And whereas the Lord is pleased in this your day, to visit a small remnant in your city, with the knowledge of his everlasting Truth, and to lead them to take up the cross, and deny themselves, and to leave the cus-

toms and ways of this evil world, and to wait upon God in the despised way of the Quakers, so called; what harm is this unto you? What evil have they done since, or what evil have that people done to any prince or government since they were a people? What is this great cry and noise made against us for? Is it not as in days past, if any man depart from iniquity, he makes himself a prey; and he that reproveth sin in the gate, for him they lay a snare? Why are the workers of iniquity so moved? Ought you not to enquire of our accusers, when they come to you, what evil we have done against God, or the wholesome laws and liberty of the land, before you lay your hand upon us?"

After warning them against the influence of their priests, &c. he thus states the necessity which he and his friends felt of obeying God rather than men, and the inefficiency of persecution to deter them from their duty.

"The more you cause this people to suffer, the more shall we be drawn, in the love and power of God, to visit them, and your city for their sakes; for we durst do no other, being commanded so of Christ, who is the Head of

our Church. And if any the least member of Him be in prison, in hunger, or want, and we visit them not, He takes it as if He had been so, and we had neglected visiting Him. And this hazard we dare not run, for all the frowns and threats of men; for we know no man, but Christ Jesus, shall ever receive power to say, *Go ye cursed, &c.* And it is not sufferings and tribulations can now affright or deter us from our service and testimony to our God; for we have learned in all states to be contented. And if our tribulations abound for the Gospel's sake, our consolation abounds much more; so that we can, in the strength of God, give our back to the smiter, and turn the other cheek, and our face to them that pluck off the hair; and, when all that is done, pray for these our enemies, and do them good against all this evil. And this we boast not of, as of ourselves, but as the gift of God, freely given unto us for Christ's sake, in whom our sufficiency is."

No. 18. "*A Lamentation over the City of Groninghen.*" 1669.—25 *pages.*

This address appears to have been excited by the rude treatment and persecution which the converts to the doctrine and practices of Friends experienced in this place.

After describing and lamenting the sinful state of the city, and earnestly recommending repentance, he thus boldly proceeds.

"Thy rulers are like fierce young lions, that roar because they are troubled, and think to affright the lambs with their thundering out threatenings. Thy priests are like the she-bear that is robbed of her whelps, seeking their revenge upon the innocent, and stirring up the young lions as to a prey. Thy people are like the wild beasts of the forest, which, with a confused noise, are gathered together to devour. Thy children run snarling to and fro in the streets, tumulting and hallooing, and uttering all manner of reproach and spite against the innocent and harmless people, who are departing from your ungodly course of life, and are called out of your Babylonish worships to be separated from you.

"O Friends! consider, are these the fruits of a Gospel ministry, and a well-governed Republic? are not these tumults and uproars, a shame to both priests and rulers, yea, and to all the masters and fathers of families in your whole city? Doth it not appear you have lost the good government that you ought to have over the people, and the children and servants, in your city and respective families? O, consider these things! Whence comes uproar? Is it not from the spirit of the Sodomists that tumulted the house of Lot? And what was it set Jerusalem of an uproar? And what set other cities in the acts of an uproar, but persecution? And was not Gamaliel wise enough to still the tumult, by persuading them to leave persection, and leave the matter to God. O that you called Christians were but so wise! But, alas! it hath grieved my heart, while I was in your city, to see and hear young and old, given up to an Ishmael spirit, mocking and scorning, and deriding the innocent; and to see how it is happened to you in Groninghen, as it was in the rebellious house of Israel of old—they that feared the Lord, were as signs and wonders in Israel."

"And now all you rulers, priests, and inhabitants of the city of Groninghen, let me treat a little more particularly with you, and enquire what is the reason you are thus moved and driven on heaps, as you are. I know the answer is: Here is a people in our city, that men call Quakers, that in their life differ from us; and if we pipe to them, they will not dance; and if we mourn, they will not lament: they will neither rejoice in that in which we rejoice, nor grieve at that at which we grieve; but in their worship, and in their manners, and words, and all, they differ from us. Well, what then! what evil have they done to you or to your city, or what have this people done against any other city, where they have lived and do live? Alas! say men, they are every where spoken against. Well, that is no rule for you to hate and persecute them; know you not the religion of the Apostles was every where spoken against, yet it was the Truth; and after that way which men called heresy worshipped they the God of their fathers? For the true Christian worship which Christ set up, was to differ from that in the mount of Samaria, and that at the temple of Jerusalem too; must Christ therefore be persecuted?

"O! how blind and ignorant is this generation, that ye should again run into the same error of the Pharisees, to condemn the old persecutors, and prove new ones yourselves, and persecute the same life, as it comes to rise in any, to witness against you and your lusts, as they and their fathers did! and so ye manifest yourselves still to be of the same race and stock, and to be born of the same estranged flesh, that always persecuted such as were born after the Spirit. And as they brought upon them all the righteous blood that was spilt from Abel to Zacharias, so you are about to bring upon you and upon your children, all the righteous blood from Abel to this day."

After alluding to the prophecy in the Apocalypse, relative to the reign of the beast during 1260 years, and expressing his opinion that the time was at hand, when Christ's kingdom should be more conspicuous on the earth; and that the power of man would be as unable to oppose it, as to stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea, or turn the sun or moon from their courses; the Author thus states, and comments on, the grounds alleged by the Magistrates for the persecution of the Quakers.

"And now, friends, I come more particularly to capitulate with you, the Magistrates and people of Groninghen, having before me four papers, all given out against a people called Quakers, and appearing to come all from one spirit, though it is sad to say and to think, that men called Magistrates, and a city called Christian, nay reformed, should have such horrible work found therein as I found in two or three days' stay in your city, and find in your papers. And because two of these papers come from you that are the Magistrates, I think it good to say something to them. First, the one is a sentence given to several citizens, the other to some not being citizens, whom you had imprisoned, in which you have warned the citizens to meet no more in such meetings as they have done, and the other to come no more in the city to such meetings, and both upon the threatening of further punishment: and that the reader may the better understand where this sentence and threatening takes its rise, I shall set down the sentence verbatim, and then write something to it by way of inquiry.

"The First complaint is unreverent behaviour: Secondly, that he is called a Quaker:

Thirdly, that he was lately at a Meeting: Fourthly, that it was the more to divulge hurtful and pernicious errors and spirit's drivings: and upon these you say, that such forbidden conventicles and dangerous sects must not be suffered, but punished in a well governed Republic; and therefore you insinuate, that if he comes any more at the Quakers' meeting, he must be looked upon as disobedient and rebellious, and be dealt with accordingly.

"Now, friends, to the first, What was the unreverent behaviour? Did you shew them a law which they would not be subject to? Came they not at your summons, in which they acknowledged you Magistrates? And stood they not attentively to hear what you said? Gave they not to you necessary answers to your questions? But it seems they put not off their hats—Was that an offence to you? Alas! that men of understanding should no more regard their reputations, than to take offence at such a thing, when there is neither law of God nor nations, nor of your own city, that requires it. You should have made a law first that they must do so, and then for your part you had done like an Ahasuerus. There was something to say for bowing, viz.

the King's commandment, the King's authority:—What! Mordecai, wilt thou not bow? the King commands it. Well, but Mordecai cannot bow if he dies for it; then you know who set up the gallows—he that was angry because he was not bowed to.

"Were not these things written for your and our learning? ye never find in Scripture that the Christians called it unreverent behaviour to have their hats upon the head; and the three children had their hats on in the furnace: do ye think they put on their hats to be cast into the furnace, or had they them not on when they stood before the king? And then this great king came to the mouth of the furnace, and saw them walk with their hats on. Why did not they pull off their hats to the king? But neither Christians nor heathens have you for example in this matter, except the apostate Christians in this time of the reign of the beast, in which he hath set up his worship instead of God's; but in this particular, I think the law is not yet made, that I know of, that commands folks to put off their hats; and where there is no law, there is no transgression.

"But what is the matter here is such offence taken about the hat? Is there any worship therein? If so, that belongs to God, and to no man. Is there any honour therein? If so, the receiving honour from one another is that which hindered the Pharisees and Jews from receiving the faith of Jesus, as you may read: so what part is that in you which is so highly offended? Is it not come of the same line and stock with Nimrod, that hunted before the Lord, when he ought to have come after; and Esau the profane man, that was wroth with him that had the blessing, though he himself had sold him his birth-right; and of the stock of Haman, and Jezebel, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Herod, and Nero, and Dioclesian, and Maximilian, and others that might be named, among whom this principle of seeking worship and honour to themselves, hath stood always high; to whom the royal seed of God could never bow.

"And which think you now was the best sort—Abel or Cain? Nimrod, or the sons of God that were in those days? Jacob or Esau? Haman or Mordecai? Jezebel, or Elijah that could not yield to her nor fear her? Nebuchadnezzar, or Shadrach Meshach and Abednego?

Christ and his disciples, or Herod and Pilate? who could not agree till they went to crucifying the just; and then, the Scripture saith, *they were made friends;* then they could agree. And Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Aurelius, Senerius, Maximus, Deinius, Valerian, Aurelian, Diocletian, what think ye of these? Were not they better that did not yield to them, than they themselves were, and they that did yield? It may be you will say, Yea, but these were heathens. To that I answer, that persecution for conscience and religion's sake, and forcing the conscience to the wills of men, is one and the same work in itself, whoever doth it; but it is two fold worse in one called Christian, than in a heathen. For your being called Christians or Christian Magistrates, gives you no more power over other men's consciences, than heathens had; for that is God's throne in mankind; and He will not give this prerogative to any, but to his Son Jesus; and woe to them that rob Him of it, for He will have his own glory, and spoil theirs too.

"*Secondly*, The thing is, he is one called a Quaker. I answer, what crime is that, to be called a Quaker—seeing the Quakers are known through the world to be harmless, and

clear of wronging any kingdom, land, or city, or private person? Their principle is, to fear God, and to do justly, and to keep their conscience unspotted; so this is neither crime nor disparagement to be called a Quaker, but rather a crown and rejoicing. *For upon that sort of men have always the blessing rested, that trembled at the Word of the Lord*, as you may read.—*And they that mock at trembling and quaking shall know a day of howling and lamenting, in which they shall tremble and quake, and wish to die our death, though they despise our life.* And, besides, you have no law against a man for being called a Quaker; and so here is no transgression yet.

"*Thirdly*, The thing is, that he was lately at a Meeting of the Quakers. *Answer.* Is that a crime? against what law is that? And when was it published, and in what book of record can we find that law that forbids the being at a Quakers' Meeting—seeing you are within the compass of the Seven United Provinces, that are spoken of so far, for granting liberty of conscience? If you are not of that mind, why do you not publish yourselves to be of another mind? What! have you forgot your fathers and grandfathers already, that suffered

so deeply to purchase liberty of conscience, and spent so much blood and treasure, and implored the aid of foreign Protestant princes, which was plenteously given them, that they might, above all things, leave you this inheritance; to wit, liberty of conscience to meet together and worship God as you were or should be persuaded? and now you are robbing and spoiling one another of this inheritance.

"What, are you framing again the old rotten pieces of Duke d'Alva's yoke, to put it upon the necks of your brethren, to tell them what Meetings they must go to, and what they must believe, and what religion they must be of? O friends! away with this work; or else it will make a stench in the nostrils of the nations, and of your neighbours; and, besides, it will bring a curse and a blasting upon you.

"*Fourthly*, But then you say, this Meeting was for the divulging and spreading of hurtful and pernicious errors, and the Spirit's leading, &c. Now, friends, these words are either true or false. If they are true that such things are divulged at our Meetings, why do not you or your teachers manifest what these pernicious errors are, that people may know them,

and how they are opposite to the Holy Scripture? For if you do not do this, your bare asserting them to be so, will hardly carry authority with it to make people believe it, except the rude tumultuous rabble, that is readier to believe lies than truth; and indeed your authority may prevail further with them to stir them up against the Truth, than it will to keep them in the band of sobriety, and from filling the streets with tumults and uproars.

"But if you intend the sober sort should believe you, then discover particularly what these hurtful and pernicious doctrines are, and how they are against the Scriptures of Truth; and if you cannot do it, set your priests at work to do it: they have wages enough to engage them to serve you, if they be not too high for you; and when you and they have done that, we will have no more Meetings in Groninghen, but will come over to you, and take up your religion, if that appears to be blameless and according to the Scripture: but till this be done, we cannot believe men's words, especially such men as, in contempt to the Spirit's leading, persecute us for owning the leadings of the Spirit. For shame, call this word in again! Were not all that ever were

sons of God, led by the Spirit of God? And did not the saints of old walk after the Spirit? And did not the Apostle tell them, if they did so, they should live? And what now! must we be persecuted for being led and guided, and drawn, and constrained by the Spirit? O abominable! If you had been born of the Spirit you could not have written so; but being born of the flesh, persecution is as natural to you as it hath been to such in former ages; but the same spirit that persecutes us for the leading of the Spirit, and mocks at us for the witnessing of the Spirit, is that which persecuted Christ Jesus, in whom this Holy Spirit lived without measure, that now liveth in us in measure: so we know we are not greater than our Lord; and if we patiently suffer for his sake, He will plead our cause with our enemies.

"But, friends, I do charge these words upon you to be false, and do require you, in the name of the Lord, to prove them true if you can, and let us know what those errors are; for I do absolutely deny the matter of fact wherewith you charge us, and that our meeting then, or at any other time, is for any such intent or purpose; so we shall leave it in the

sight of God and men, till we hear more particularly what hurtful and pernicious errors are charged against us.

"And where you say such things may not be tolerated in a well governed Commonwealth, but ought to be punished, &c. do you mean here your own Republic, that you are so zealous to preserve in good order? If so, I ask if drunkenness, and swearing, and ballad-singers, and rope-dancers, and mountebanks with their jests and mockeries, and all such things as gaming and fighting, &c. if these may be tolerated in such a Republic, nay countenanced? Do not your streets swarm with ballad-singers, and every one or two of them gets several great meetings in a day; some of them singing such horrible, bawdy, filthy things, as would I believe make the prostitutes in Rome and Venice blush for shame; see "*Stemme Vorman Jop*," for one, with several others that I found in your city. And is this the Republic that is so well governed, that the people of God may not innocently meet together in it, to wait upon God, and to exhort one another, and build up one another in the faith of Christ, the Light, but they must be punished?

"O friends! if either men or women had not lost shame and modesty, such cursed, abominable things could never be permitted in your hearts to be sung. These things do not shew you to be such a well governed republic, but your judgment is turned backward; and while you seek to terrify them that do well, you are the countenancers of all manner of licentious and ungodly persons, upon whom your sword ought to lie.

"And as for your threatening, we have only this to say, we shall do nothing in contempt of you or your authority, and we hope we shall not forbear the doing of any thing that the Lord our God requires at our hands, knowing that it is better to obey God than man, and having learned of Christ, who said: I will tell you whom you shall fear: *Fear not them that can only kill the body*, and can go no farther, *but fear Him that can kill both soul and body, and can cast them into hell.* So our cause is before the Lord; let Him do with us or suffer others to do with us as He pleaseth; for his will is good, and we are given up to do and suffer his will. And if any men be our enemies for the Truth's sake, we dare not but love and pity them; and when they know what

they do, they will do so no more; and, in the mean time, the Lord God of heaven support us by his power and living presence, in which is that life that we have hungered after."

The Author then notices some scurrilous and filthy songs, which had been sung about the streets of Groninghen, and observes: "As to us, we can well bear such things. Drunkards made songs of David, and the rebellious of old chaunted to the viol, and drank their wine in bowls, but forgot the affliction of Joseph."

He thus concludes his address:

"So, friends, I have, with as much brevity as may be, touched on these things; and what I have written, I have written in an universal love to you all; and do desire, that I may hear that you grow wiser and more considerate; and not like a company of mad people, run on heaps, you know not wherefore; but as you are called Christians, and reformed ones too, shew forth fruits of sobriety; and if your priests think that any in your city are deluded, if they be spiritual, let them take their spiritual weapons, and convince them in love and

tenderness; and not shew themselves so like the shrine-makers at Ephesus, to cry, *Help, men of Israel!* so they cry, Help, Schout! and, Help, Burgher-masters! and, Help, wild and rude people, and boys in the street!

"O! shame of these things, and let your priests buckle on their armour like men, and maintain their church, and doctrine, and religion to be apostolical; and let us have liberty to dispute in their synagogues every Sabbath-day, as it was in the Apostles' time; and if any on their part, or on ours, offer violence, let the Schout lay his hand upon such. For methinks it is a pitiful case, that you that are burghers, shop-keepers, and merchants, and the like, should be fain to help the learned Divines, so called, in a matter of religion, and that you must use your civil power to defend them and their religion, against their adversaries and antagonists, when they come against them, with nothing but arguments and Scripture, and such like weapons.

"Consider these things, and stand still a little in coolness; and God will open your understandings, and give you wisdom how to do in this matter; so as that the Lord may bless you

and your city, and you may all endeavour, in your respective places, to stop the flood of iniquity and wickedness, and so prevent the curse of God, which otherwise hangs over your heads."

No. 19. "*Address to the Baptists in Holland, with a Query for them to answer.*" *No date.—4 pages.*

This Tract appears to have arisen out of a conference with several Baptists.

The question is as follows:

"That whereas the Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, *Eph.* iv. 5, saith, *There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;* I asked what that one baptism was? Whether the apostle in this place did intend that baptism which in Scripture is called the baptism of John, which I confessed was with outward water, or whether he intended the baptism of the holy Ghost, which in Scripture is called the baptism of Christ; and I urging and pressing for an answer, you told me you could not tell.

"Now, friends, this thing is needful to be known, both by you and us, and by all men; therefore consider it: If the baptism be but one and you be ignorant of that one, then have you none, or as ill as none; for if it be but one, and you take up another thing in the stead of that one, it is impossible it can produce that effect which the one true baptism would do; and consequently is as bad as none. So search yourselves, friends, for by your discourse you have given me ground to suspect you are as much strangers to the one faith, that gave the saints a victory over the world, as you are to the one baptism that makes clean the conscience, and is the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God. 1 *Peter*, iii. 21. And where these two are wanting, and their effects, there is nothing enjoyed or known, that is profitable to salvation. And though men talk of these things, and make profession of them; yet where their fruits do not appear, it is manifest the things themselves are not there, but bare talk. So, friends, search your hearts, and consider your ways, and turn your minds to the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Light that enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world. And as you wait in that, it will give you an under-

standing in things you yet know not, and make you able, in simplicity, to answer this question, and also make you partakers of this one baptism; which is my hearty desire for you."

No. 20. "*A Testimony concerning Edward Graunt.*" *No date.—3 pages.*

This is a short notice of an honest and pious Friend, who appears to have met his end by the violent abuse of a company of troopers, who found him, with a few other persons, quietly met together for the purpose of worship. As it is said, "the troopers came riding upon them," I conclude the Friends had been excluded from their house, and were assembled in the street, as near to it as possible.

No. 21. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp, when a Prisoner.*" *No date.—4 pages.*

This is almost a song of triumph. The prisoner seems to lose sight of his outward bonds, in contemplating the liberty with which God had made him free. The style, particularly of the Introduction, is highly figurative and poetic. As the Epistle is short, I shall extract it without curtailment.

"O ye lambs of the green pasture! ye sheep of my Father's fold! ye who by the word of life, are made acquainted with the power of regeneration, and are born into the nature of the Lamb's innocency, and grown up in the virtue of sincerity—O, how glorious is your appearance! Mine eye beholdeth, and my heart is ravished; my soul shall praise the God of my life for ever and ever, on your behalf. From the hill have I viewed you, and from the high tower of my refuge have I looked on you. My eye is opened; and I see you the flock of undefiled lambs, in whom my God is glorified. O! feed ye, and be ye nourished; for your pastures are enlarged, and your Shepherd's care is over you. His arm is able to defend you from every beast of the field. By day will He

feed you in his pleasant pastures; and by night will He fold you in a fold of rest.

"O my beloved friends! this is the day of which we have spoken, and in which not only the words, but the nature must be manifested. And ye who bear the Lamb's image, and grow in his nature, first being proved, shall be preserved and delivered; and in the day of trial feel the word of patience; for that stayeth the thoughts, and keepeth satisfied in the present state. And here is the glory of the saints, who only of all the children of men, can glory in tribulation, and can grow then in patience. Now doth the glory of Sion's daughters appear to be within them; and their strength is a continual spring, whereby her sons are armed with power, to tread down change and alterations, and dwell in the dominion over trouble. Glory, glory, to the God of our strength, who keepeth us—who guardeth Israel—who armeth his chosen ones, and leads them to the battle—and keeps our head covered therein, that the enemy cannot wound it.

"And here, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, in the generation of our endless posteri-

ty, is my unity with you preserved. Though by locks and bars I be separated outwardly from you; yet, by the invisible flowings of life, I do reach you, and am felt by you, in that Eternal Spirit which quickens and gives life to every member of the Church of Christ.

"This present separation is for trial of our faith, love, and patience, that through exercise they may be perfected, and we all may learn the heavenly and internal knowledge, sense, and feeling, one of another, by sinking into, and waiting in the Spirit of the Father, by which the whole body is knit and united together: and whosoever knows us not in this, is not truly of us; for, as we have said, declarations and prophecies must cease; but the Word which begets and gives life, abides for ever; and is the daily bread which is set before the mercy seat, in the house of our God, of which none may eat, but those who are sanctified, washed, and clean, according to the Law; and are witnesses of the offering that makes atonement. And these may now feed together, being nourished, and may grow strong, as well as ever; because the enemy cannot rob you of your food and your water.

Therefore eat, O friends! and drink abundantly of the new wine, well refined. Let your hearts be glad, and let your souls rejoice in the promise; for this is the day of the Lamb's battle; and the day of his victory is near at hand, wherein the carcases must be buried out of sight, and all dead worship and without life, put under; and the living worship of the living God must be exalted more and more. Therefore, rejoice ye, and I say again, rejoice. Let your hearts be strong, O my beloved friends! and comfort ye yourselves therein, and one another, and love one another. Let the spirit of love abound in you, one towards another, in how much ye see the enemy seeks to discomfort you.

"Mark the weak among you in true love and compassion. Beware of the wiles of those that are crafty, who seek to lead from the simplicity of the Gospel. Keep your testimony alive in all things wherein ye are required by the Lord, and be not terrified at all that is or may come to pass. And the God of Peace and Power, of eternal Love and Truth, preserve you all faithful to the end, to the everlasting consolation of your souls, and glory of his great Name; for the sake whereof He hath

saved us, and delivered us, and will yet deliver us: to whom be everlasting praises, and holy thanksgiving, for ever and ever. Amen.

"STEPHEN CRISP."

No. 22. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp to Friends.*" *No date.—6 pages.*

This is an Epistle of general advice, and contains some excellent practical matter, as will be evinced by the following extracts, viz.

"Dear Friends! this is a certain saying, and worthy to be believed: *That all temptations to evil, both inward and outward, of what sort soever they be, do spring from that power which God will in time bring down, and break to pieces, for his Seed's sake.* And they that abide low in the lowly seed, shall behold their deliverance with rejoicing, and shall bless the God of their salvation for ever. But if any one, in the hour of temptation, lifts up himself above that tender principle that teacheth a whole dependence upon God; then such an one seems wise and strong in his own eyes, but by and by falleth into the snare of the

enemy; and then sees his own weakness and folly, it may be when it is too late. Therefore let every one be kept in the pure fear of God, waiting daily to feel his strength renewed through the Spirit of Christ, that worketh in us both the will and also the deed. And such as have their sole dependence upon God in the faith of his Son, take no care how to pass through the trials and difficulties of their day; but, as children of a tender Father, they cast their care upon God, who cares for them, for his Name's sake, and brings them through and over all, in his own time and manner; and then have such experience, and can speak a word to the weary soul, from the sense of what God hath done for them.

"So, dear hearts, now you know the way of God, walk in it, with an upright and an humble mind; and let your cries arise to God for the planting and spreading his Name; and let your life so shine in the beauty of holiness, that the mouths of all Truth's enemies may be stopped; and the sober inquirers after the Truth, may be reached by your faithfulness and innocency, which is the loudest trumpet that can sound out God's praise in the earth. And without this life, all preaching and tes-

timony is to no purpose, but tends to the condemnation of them that make profession of that they enjoy not.

"And, dear hearts, love one another with the same love wherewith the Lord hath loved you; which is that love that forgives trespasses, and covers offences. And hereby ye will always have a sense of each other's life and sincerity, and be tender over the good in one another, and travail for one another's growth and prosperity. For this love teacheth to lay no burdens upon one another, but to help to bear each other's burdens, as Christ Jesus hath taught. And while this love dwells in your hearts, there is no room for evil thoughts, nor for jealousies, nor evil surmisings. But whatever is seen in another that is not right, this love constrains the one to deal uprightly with the other; and the other feeling the virtue of this love, is constrained thereby to submit to the word of exhortation for the Lord's sake, and so both are comforted and refreshed together.

"And, friends, wait diligently, daily to feel the life of your testimony renewed in your souls; that ye may know the way of God

to be still the new and the living way. And this will keep you from fainting, by reason of the length of time that ye bear the cross, and sufferings, and reproach of the Gospel; for when your life and inward consolation is renewed, as well as your exercises and trials, there can be no weariness.

"And this keeps out of all dead formality, which all other professors fall into when they have lost the life of their testimony, when they retain a formal profession, which stands in words and outward things, which neither pleases God, nor brings comfort to their souls.

"But you, dearly beloved, wait in diligence for the dew of heaven, daily to water the plant of God, that ye may be fruitful to Him that hath planted you, and may receive his blessings in your bosoms, in your families, and in your meetings, and your souls may praise his Name for ever.

"So, dear friends, the God of my life bless you, preserve and prosper you, in his blessed testimony, to which He hath called you; and

strengthen you, and give you wisdom, so to walk as ye have heard and learned from the beginning; that, in the end, ye may rest in Him, with all the faithful.

"*This is the earnest breathing and desire of your Friend, in the fellowship of the Gospel of Peace.*

"STEPHEN CRISP."

No. 23. "*An Epistle from S. Crisp to Friends in the North.*" *J. Whiting's Catalogue dates it* 1670.—6 *pages.*

This is an Epistle of general exhortation and congratulation to Friends, on their being preserved in "the faith and patience of Jesus."

The Author had laboured much in the North of England, and felt an apostolic care over the converts. He thus exhorts them to an entire devotion to God:

"And, dear friends and brethren, remember to keep holy the Sabbath of your rest in Christ, which is now come, and see that you rest from your labours, and from toiling your spirits in the earth and earthly things; and whoever feels a burden, lay it off, whatever it be, that ye may possess all things in the free Spirit, that looks not at the value of any thing in comparison of the Truth, remembering the words of our Lord, *That where the treasure is, the heart will also be.* So that those whose heart is in a wife, in a husband, in children, in trade, in riches, in house and lands, or whatever else, so far that they cannot willingly

give them up for the Truth, these are such an one's treasure; and this treasure is in the earth; and the heart is there, whatever they profess. And these things come to be gods in the secret chambers, besides the Lord; and so his first and lasting commandment, who said, *Thou shalt have no other god besides Me*, is broken; and this brings guilt and burdens upon the soul, and then thou canst not keep the spiritual Sabbath to God; for no burden must be borne thereon. But he that is entered into the rest, is ceased from his own works, as God did from his; and such keep the Sabbath holy.

"So, dearly beloved, cast away that labour and toil, which hath made some to walk uncomfortably in the way, and some to faint and fall from it; and lift up your hearts to God in the faith, and give up yourselves and all things to his will; and there comes an end of all your cares, saving only to be found doing his will, in your generation.

"And in this blessed service is my joy and my fellowship with you, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, in whose love my heart is, at this time, enlarged towards you, beyond what

words can utter. Yet having no new thing to write to you, but the very same which we have heard and learned from the beginning, to wit, that glorious testimony of the resurrection of life and of salvation, which God, through the manifestation of his Son, hath committed unto us to bear. In this blessed testimony I still labour in the strength of the Lord; and He hath blessed me therein, and caused me, by the operation of his Divine Love, to sound the same Gospel unto several countries and nations in the eastern parts of the world; where a door of utterance is opened unto me, and many have believed and obeyed the Truth."

No. 24. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp to Friends in the Eastern parts.*" *No date.—3 pages.*

This is an Epistle of affectionate caution.

No. 25. "*Another Epistle from S. Crisp to Friends.*" *No date.—5 pages.*

This Epistle appears, from the following extracts, to have been written to a company of Friends in some foreign country. The latter part of the extracts affords a striking proof of the tendency of persecution to promote, rather than to check, what it is intended to suppress.

"In the fellowship of that pure Spirit by which the Lord hath reached unto us, and quickened us, and brought us from that sleep and death of sin, and made us sensible of a life that is eternal—in this holy fellowship, I

say, doth my soul dearly salute you; earnestly breathing unto God, who is our Fountain, that He may daily multiply his grace, mercy, and peace upon you, and in you all; and may, by the influence of his good Spirit and blessed presence, make up unto you, that which others in England and elsewhere do enjoy, and you want; viz. the many precious opportunities of being comforted together in our general and large Meetings, and the large flowings forth of the Spirit in the ministers of the Gospel.

"But, friends, the Lord our God can be all, and will be all, in all unto you that trust in Him; and this know, you are often in our remembrance, and that Spirit of Life that is in us, doth often bring you to mind for good, as members of the same body, nourished by the same bread by which we live. And, my dear friends, your testimony for God, in that howling wilderness, where Sion, our mother, and all her children are yet in suffering, is very dear and precious in the sight of God, and of me his servant. I have, with comfort and refreshment to myself and many brethren, been drawn forth to speak of what I saw and felt among

you, as to your patient and joyful suffering for the Gospel's sake, in which you have believed.

"And now, dear hearts, go on in the name of the Lord, till your testimony is accomplished, and let your trust be alone in God, who hitherto hath made way for you beyond expectation; and will still take the care of you, as a father over his children: and have a care that nothing be suffered or permitted among you, that hurts your testimony for God and his blessed Name. O friends! it is more worth than our lives; for this is the day in which God is making known, through us, unto the world, that there is a Power able to keep them that trust in it, in the path of righteousness and holiness.

"And, dear friends, let none be weary of tribulations, knowing that the glory of God and the Gospel is thereby advanced; and the seed that is sown in this generation through sufferings, shall come up in the next, in great glory and dominion. Therefore be of good courage; your work, service, tribulations, and afflictions, will never be forgotten.

"And, dear friends, I came lately out of England, where there is the greatest addition and increase of the Church of God, that ever mine eyes beheld; and the occasion of it, as to the outward, is a certain law that is made to plunder Friends' goods, for meeting and preaching; 40*l.* sterling for preaching, except the first time, which is 20*l.*; and 20*l.* the house where the meeting is, and 10*s.* every one that meets. And hereupon many Friends have been spoiled of their goods; and their boldness, steadfastness, faithfulness, and courage, have astonished the nation from the greatest to the least; and many have believed; and many officers and magistrates choose rather to suffer themselves, than to execute the law. So that Truth's prosperity is very eminent in that nation, and in Scotland and Ireland. There is also a great increase: and remember, my dear lambs, ye are the first fruits unto our God in these countries; that is your crown; wear it honourably, and suffer for the remainder of the seed, in meekness and patience; and commit the work to God, who will break through the nations in his great power, and will make our innocency shine as the sun.

"So, dear lambs, God Almighty preserve you to Himself, and comfort and guide you as a Shepherd, and feed and satisfy you with heavenly refreshment. This is the desire of my soul for you; and I know it is your desire. And I know God doth and will hear the supplications and cries of his own; and in this confidence and faith, I remain your true and real friend in the Gospel of Peace.

"STEPHEN CRISP."

No. 26. *"To the Rulers and Inhabitants in Holland, and the rest of the United Provinces.*

(From the original Manuscript of a Book in Dutch, called, The Ground and Cause of the Misery of the Netherlands.")

Although this Address may be considered as of a local and temporary character, it contains so much valuable matter, relative to the connexion between the prosperity and virtue of nations, that I shall make pretty copious extracts from it. The Tract derives additional interest from the subsequent spoliations to which the Dutch have been subjected, and the strange downfall of their political power, since that period, when the "high and mighty Lords of Holland" were courted as allies, and dreaded as enemies, by the principal governments of Europe.

He opens his Address with the following lively description of the state of the people:

"O Holland, and the adjacent Provinces, a renowned land, a land full of riches, full of people, full of religions, and full of all iniquity! O! what lamentation shall I take up

over thee, O Netherlands! My soul is afflicted for thee, and my heart is filled with sorrow concerning thy state. How is distress and anguish come upon thee ere thou art aware! And how are thy bowels filled with confusion and distraction, breakings and shatterings on every side. Thy wise men and rulers have lost their ancient policy, and thy whole land hath lost that unity in which thy glorying was; and misery is broken in upon thee like a sea, and there are no banks to keep it out. Thy strong holds have been, and are still, but snares to thee, and gins of thy own preparing, wherein thou art catched and taken, and hast none to deliver thee. Thy gold and money is now no Saviour; neither availeth it thee that thou hast gotten great riches; for that doth but sharpen the force of thy enemies against thee. Thy multitude of counsellors is now no safety to thee, because they are broken in judgment, and confounded and shattered in their counsels, every man being joined to his own faction, and seeking the promoting thereof; thy allies stand afar off, to see what will become of thee.

"O renowned land, of whose fame and greatness the whole world rung; and all princes

and potentates had an eye upon thy affairs and prosperity, marvelling whereto it would grow! how is thy glory stained—thy name and fame decayed—thy beauty turned to ashes—thy strength to weakness—thy unity to confusion and tumults—thy dread to reproach and shame; and the eyes of all potentates now looking out at thy fall and desolation, which hasteth upon thee!

"These things are greatly to be lamented; and yet is there a greater lamentation over thee; and that is, that few or none have laid these things to heart, or sought out the cause of this misery, or set a hand to remove it; but the nearer the plagues come, the more do pride, looseness, and hardness of heart, fill thy land, and cities, and people. Therein few or none stand in the gap, few or none plead with God by true repentance, and turning from those abominations for which the mighty God of heaven is come to visit thee; but thy eyes and mind are out at this cause and that cause, crying out, this is a traitor, and that is a traitor; and one makes lies, another reports and spreads them, and a third proceeds upon that as upon a foundation; and so judgment and justice is turned backward, and your fingers

are made foul with blood, and your hands full of iniquity; so that your sword cannot prevail, nor your designs prosper, until you repent, and turn to the hand that smites you. And then, on the other hand, how are the eyes of the people out at saviours upon the earth, feeding yourselves with vain and windy hopes, to rid yourselves from your calamity by this means and that means, setting up one man, and pulling down another, calling strangers to your assistance, rather than making peace with an offended God, whose anger is justly kindled against you, because of your abominations.

"Another great misery upon thee at this time is, that thou hast few or none, to deal plainly with thee, in this thy forsaken condition; but thy teachers, who have been the great stirrers up of this confusion, and makers of parties within thee, are as blind seers that can see no way for thy escape; but are putting you upon desperate designs, which tend more to their own interest and advantage than to yours; so thinking to make an advantage of your misery, and build their tower higher with your ruin. And in place of telling you how you were brought into this condition, and

how you might come out, they are crying out, that they have been too much despised, and their Church counsels too much inspected, and their power too much limited and restrained; and you have given too much liberty for people to exercise their consciences in matters of religion as they were persuaded, though contrary to them and their prescriptions so that if you will but serve them in persecuting their opposers, though more upright than themselves; and if you will but set them up, and put more into their mouths, they will cry peace to you. O! beware of such blind guides, that see not the danger, nor the way to escape it; but such have you too long followed, O ye Netherlanders! until now both the leaders and the led, the rulers and the people, are fallen and falling into a pit together.

"And now that things are thus far gone, O! that there were yet but an ear to hear counsel, that I might have hope concerning you, that ye might yet turn to the Lord, and that He might have mercy on you before utter ruin hath laid you desolate. Yea, a travail is upon me for you, that ye might be saved, if it be possible, and the decree be not sealed against

you. And, however, that I may be clear in God's sight, and free from the blood of all men, it lies upon me to spread a few things by way of counsel and consideration, before the people of these countries, that the just principle in all consciences may be reached unto, unto which I do appeal; and they shall testify in the day of judgment, in the face of all the rebellious, that they were warned, and that they rejected counsel."

He then calls their attention to some of the causes of their condition, amongst which, he enumerates the hypocrisy that prevailed in the land—the loss of that simplicity which distinguished their forefathers—of that zeal and fervency which formerly appeared for reformation—and the rendings and tearings that obtained amongst them on account of doctrine and worship. He then points out the imperfect means which they were using for deliverance, and thus proceeds:

"Consider what use is at this time made of your low estate, that, instead of turning to the Lord, whose heavy hand is upon you, and passing by offences wherein ye have offended

each other, and forgiving injuries, and joining together in covenant with God, and one another in love, as Christians ought to do;—I say, instead hereof, how is one taking advantage of revenge upon another, and bringing forth mischief and evil against his neighbour and his brother, and by all means, true or false, sometimes seeking the ruin and destruction each one of him that is against him, or hath injured him.

"This is not the way to heal thy wounds, O Netherlands! but is the way to make thy wounds daily bleed afresh, and to give matter to thy enemies to rejoice over you, who can so easily rejoice and triumph one over another.

"Far better were it that ye did humble yourselves, and forgive one another, and seek the public welfare by banishing each one out of his own bosom that traitor called *wrakesucht*, [revenge] and enmity, which hath been the ruin of many famous countries, and hath begun to ruin yours, and will certainly ruin it, if not cast out; for self-interest always breeds contention, and contention *wrakesucht*. But the universal love of God, which teacheth, in the first place, to give no occasion of offence, preserves all societies in peace; and had this universal love of God

prevailed in this land, things had not come to the pass they are come to: but pride and haughtiness went before a fall, and now are the lofty fallen; and they that have been long contriving how to get into great honours and dignities, are as in a moment fallen. O that all that are concerned both in this falling and rising, would consider the just hand of God in these things! but let none act in revenge against his neighbour, nor his brother; for vengeance is the Lord's, and He doth and will repay it; and if some magistrates must be turned out because they have been exalted, let men more humble, more wise, more fearing God, and hating covetousness, be nominated in their places; and not such as will but step into their decaying glory, and withering dignities, and there exalt themselves as they have done; for that is the way to bring down more judgments and plagues upon this distressed land; and for it always to be unsettled and filled with confusion.

"It is worth the consideration of all men, how the mighty hand of God is manifested in this our age, in breaking the decrees and force of men, and in overturning all devices which are contrived of men, for the settling of their

own interest; by which all men ought to learn to take heed of binding, or seeking to bind, the hand of the Almighty. When was there more policy and counsel employed for the settling of self-interest than was in England against the present king? And when men's bands were at the strongest, then the Lord confounded their counsels, and brought him over them, whom they had most excluded. Yet this served not the rulers of this land for a warning, who trusted not so much in the Lord for their establishment, if it were his will, as in their own edicts and contrivances to keep out the young prince of Orange; and how suddenly were all their bands and edicts broken!

"Therefore, how had all men need to stand in awe, and to fear before the Lord; and every one to act quietly in his own sphere, without having regard to self-interest, and endeavouring to establish it by deep and crafty contrivances, and without having an eye to what shall be, except they knew the counsel of the Almighty therein. Therefore, O Prince, rulers, and people! be wise, sober, and watchful; and fear and dread the living God, who sees all your thoughts and purposes; and so

many of your purposes as are contrary to his holy, pure, and righteous will, He will either prevent and bring to nought, or else suffer to come to pass to the hurt and sorrow of the purposers thereof. And in both He will glorify his Name, and make the inhabitants of the earth, both high and low, to know that He is God, and that there is no God besides Him, that can pull down and set up at his pleasure; and that arrogancy, pride, and cruelty, and oppression, are no more pleasing to Him in one man's name or appearance, than in another: and that no throne can be established but in righteousness; nor any counsel or government prosper but what is grounded upon Justice and Truth, which is the foundation of every thing that is fast; and what is not built thereupon is easily shaken and removed, as experience hath always taught, and doth teach: therefore saith wisdom, *Prov.* viii. 15, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice, &c.* and happy is that king, prince, and ruler, who takes wisdom for his guide, and the fear of God, which is the beginning thereof, for his counsellor."

After expostulating with the Burghers who were engaged in the defence of their cities, for their vicious conduct, he says:

"Consider also, if it be not high time to leave off wickedness, and not multiply it, especially when death stands by the door; and in the grave there is no work. And let none say: Our city is strong, our burghers are valiant, our commanders are true and faithful; for if all these things be so, yet these cannot save you; for the hand of the Lord is above and beyond all these things; and his hand is upon you for your sin and iniquity; and from it can no man protect nor deliver you; read *Psalm* cxxvii. 1. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen watch in vain; and how can you expect the Lord to be a keeper of your cities, when you are daily filling them with those things that are abominable in his sight? May He not justly cast you out as a reproach and shame before your enemies, who exceed them all in profession; and yet daily increase your sins and wickedness. O! repent, repent, and cease to do evil! and cleanse your hearts and purify your hands, ye double-minded, or else the hand that is lifted up against you, will lay you waste, and none shall be able to deliver you.

"In the next place, consider what you are doing, all you who are daily raising tumults

and insurrections in the bowels of this distressed land, breaking the bounds of all order or moderation, stoning, plundering, and killing, and evilly entreating whom you please; yea, your rulers themselves, upon the bare suggestions of every idle and unruly tongue. What do you think will be the effect of these things? How shall your fastings and prayers procure a blessing from the righteous God, while your hands are full of blood and cruelty, disorder and misrule. Is this you that used to be crying out, to those who, for conscience' sake, could not in some things be subject to the commands of rulers, but rather exposed themselves to patient suffering—O! ye must be subject to magistrates; ye must not rebel against authority, nor be seditious; and such like.

"Where now is your zeal for the authority and for the magistrates? Doth it not appear that deceit and hypocrisy have lodged in the secret chambers of your hearts; and now is it not manifest that ye regard neither magistrates nor authority, but the bringing to pass your mad and monstrous wills? raging as madmen, without either bounds or order; tossed like a sea, one while one way, another while another,

without any stability; by which you are a shame both to your religion and government, and a grief to all that have the fear of God before their eyes.

"Were it not better that every one rested in quietness and in peace, waiting upon God, to see Him bring down and set up at his pleasure; and discerning of God, (who is the Fountain of wisdom to endue your Prince and Rulers with wisdom,) how to remove evil men out of authority, and to place better in their places, and you to continue in obedience to the power of God, wronging no man, and abusing no man? Would not this be a speedier way to bring down a blessing upon you, and your land and government, and to stop the proceedings of your enemies, than by filling the land with tumults and uproars, with violence and cruelties. To that of God in all consciences I speak; let that answer me.

"And now the bands of government are broken among you, and must be again made up, or else you must inevitably perish. Let every one, both high and low, consider what government in itself is; that so ye may, from the true original thereof, proceed every one to

know your place in the creation, both how to rule and to be ruled.

" The apostle Paul saith, *The powers that be, are of God;* but that power by which a magistrate becomes a tyrant, or a subject becomes a rebel, that is not of God, but of Satan, who is the author of evil; but the power that is of God leaves neither ruler nor subject to the liberty of their own will, but limits both to the will of God; so that the magistrate hath no power to command evil to be done, because he is a magistrate; and the subject hath no liberty to do evil, because a magistrate doth command it; but both must be subject to the supreme power of God, if they will be happy, for that is the ground of happiness. Now this power as it is in God, is incomprehensible, and without limit or end; but as it is manifest in the sons and daughters of men, it is the pale and limit that stands between all good and evil actions; and all good that is done, is done in it, and all evil that is done, is done without it.

" And this power stands in all men, as a fixed, settled principle to rule them, and to give them law in every action and word, what

they must do, and what they must forbear; and he that acts by and within the compass of this, he hath no cause to fear the power of the magistrate, because he hath unity with it; for his sword is his praise, and a terror to those that do evil. And therefore God, who is a God of order and peace, hath made known this just and equal principle, called Power, Wisdom, Light, Truth, Justice, &c. in every man, both high and low, that men might live in order and in peace upon the face of the earth.

"By this the Ruler knows it is not good to be fierce, cruel, or injurious; and also that if he were a Subject, he would not be so done unto. By this the Subject knows he ought not to be stubborn, rebellious, or treacherous; and that if he were a Ruler he would not be so done unto. So, as long as this blessed principle of God is submitted to both by rulers and people, so long they are a blessing, comfort, and strength, one to another, and not longer. For the power in the Ruler is one with the power in the Subject; and whosoever turns from the power, the power turns against him, and the unity is broken; and instead

of peace and tranquillity, there is discord and trouble.

"Therefore happy and blessed are the prince and people, who are both subject to the higher power, which is the power of God; for such feel perfect love and unity one with another, and the prince commands in obedience to God, and the subject obeys for God's sake, and not out of fear; and a government and a rule builded upon this foundation, and kept here, shall always prosper. Here no man seeks to vassalize his fellow creature to his own will, and no man counts obedience to his lawful Prince a vassalage; but both serve God in their several places with cheerfulness. And how happy would such a nation be, and such a people! and how ought every one to labour to attain to the knowledge and obedience of this power, which made all things good, and keeps all in good order!

"This, this alone, O Netherlands! can heal thy wound, and cure thy breach. This is that which can drive away thy enemies, and reconcile thee with thy friends and brethren; and until this blessed power of God be

had in more esteem in thee, thou canst not be healed.

"To this alone belong the titles of *Groote, Hoogen, Moogen, Achbaer, &c.* [*great, high, mighty, &c.*] and not to frail and sinful men. And such as have taken these titles upon them, or do still take them, the hand of God is and will be against them; and will make them know, that out of this power they are neither Hoogen, nor Moogen, nor Achbaer, but full of breakings and confusion: and this pride and exaltation hath been one cause of thy wound. And if thou shouldest be made whole on one side, thou wilt break out of another; and if thou hadst no enemies, thou wouldst prove thy own destroyer. Therefore whoever hath an ear, let him hear the voice that calls for truth, and righteousness, and judgment among you; and when ye are willing to hear the Lord, then He will hear you, and not before. And so, in the mean time, while his voice and power in you is slighted and despised, he will despise and slight all your fasts and prayers; yea, and all your labour and toil to settle yourselves either in religion or government, shall be in vain. And this shall you know from the Lord, when

He hath fulfilled his purpose upon you, and laid waste the heritage of the rebellious, and brought you down to lowliness and to repentance, and to confess unto Him, and to his power, which is over all, blessed for ever.

"So, friends, thus far have I cleared myself, and dealt faithfully with you, and warned you of the causes of your evils; and whether you will hear or forbear, the Lord will one day make you know that he Hath raised me up as a watchman to your country; and that I have seen the evil coming upon you, and have faithfully warned you of your evil ways, both now and before at divers times, as may be seen in my complaint over Groninghen, printed in the Year 1669. And well had it been for those Netherlands, if they had taken counsel then; then had these evils not come upon them.

"And now I am again drawn forth in the love of God, once more to write unto you, though I would willingly have forborn writing at such a time as this, if I might have been clear in God's sight. And glad should I be that you had an ear to hear while yet the day lasteth; and let none be offended at the plain-

ness of my dealing with you; for it is high time to speak plainly; destruction is at the door, and it is not my work to flatter you, nor to advance any party or faction among you, as the most of your manifold foolish scribblers at this time do, by their pasquils and pamphlets; which tend more to increasing your misery, and kindling up more animosities and feuds among you, than to taking away either the cause of thy misery, or to the healing of thy breach.

"And for my part, I have learned not to fear man, nor to seek the favour of any party or faction; but to answer the witness of God in all men's consciences, is my aim and desire. And so, hoping there is yet a people in thee, O Netherlands! whose day is not yet over, and to whom the word of prophecy and counsel may not be sent to make your ears deaf, your eyes blind, and your hearts fat; but that it may tend to the bettering and amendment of life;—I say, hoping there is such a people, I leave this my testimony, to be read by them in the fear of the Lord, and to be improved to his glory and their comfort. And for the rest, who cannot endure sound counsel and reproofs, but persist in their iniquity, and har-

den their hearts against the Lord and his Truth, and against the testimony of his servants, such shall be forced to endure his plagues and judgments, until they are converted or consumed. And to conclude, I say with Malachi, both to priests and people: *They shall find the day of God to be as a fiery oven, and all that do not lay his word to heart, shall be as fuel.* Read *Mal.* ii. 1, 2. iv. 1."

No. 27. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp, to the Princess Elizabeth in Germany.*" *No Date.—7 pages.*

So much of the matter of this Epistle is of general application, and affords so favourable a specimen of the plain, but not uncourteous address, of a Christian minister to a person of rank, that I venture to think the whole will be acceptable.

"In that love that is universal and free in its own flowings forth, am I at this time drawn forth to visit the beloved seed of God, with a tender salutation, which will be better felt and understood in that tender, lowly seed of the

kingdom, than it can be read or comprehended in the sensual or carnal comprehending wisdom of this world. Therefore my desire is, that with an inward retired consideration, thou mayst consider what I have to say, which I was desirous, and did hope to have signified unto thee by word of mouth; but am hindered at present, through weakness and inability of body, and other urgent concerns for the precious Truth's sake, (of which I am a servant,) which do not admit of so long a journey, nor of any long stay at present in these parts. Neither could I be clear in God's sight, without signifying somewhat of that which is upon me concerning thee. And I pray God thou mayst have a sense of the depth of that love from whence it springs.

"Well, my friend, for a long time hath a love wrought in my heart to your family; and great pity wrought in me many years since, in consideration of the distresses of the years of your childhood; and a secret joy was in me, when it pleased God to end those long German wars, and to restore you in some measure to your former dignities and capacities, wherein you were made capable of serving God in your generation, who had been so gracious to you.

And when I heard that thy brother Charles had laid his hand upon God's little heritage in the Palatinate, it grieved my soul for his sake; and I was drawn to go to him at Heydelburg; and, in great meekness, and fear of God, to warn him of God's displeasure, which I felt kindled against him. And this was about the year 1669; and I was constrained to tell him that as he had stretched out his hand against God's heritage, the Lord would stretch out his hand against his, if he did not cease persecuting the Lord's people for their conscience towards God. And O, that he had taken counsel in the day of his visitation!

"And when I heard that thou didst receive several under thy protection, who were expelled and banished from other places, though I knew their root and ground to be that which would not abide in the day of trial, yet I did rejoice on thy behalf, as believing that it sprang from a tender principle in thee, which was willing, as far as thou knewest, to receive disciples in the name of disciples; and I did hope, that in time thou mightest come to have a disciple's reward; and that thou mightest, in the end, come to know the revelation of that root and foundation which hath been the

Rock of Ages, to the righteous in all generations.

"And according to this hope, a travail was in my spirit for thee before the Lord, that He, by his Divine Power, might open thy understanding, to see beyond, and over the offences and stumbling-blocks, that some, pretenders to high things, had cast in thy way; and might learn thereby to cease from man and men, and their words and ways, and might be brought to the holy anointing in thyself, through faith in Christ Jesus, the quickening Spirit; that by it thou mightest be taught to know the unchangeable Truth, and how to walk therein with a steadfast and upright heart before the Lord, to his glory and honour, and to the good example of those committed to thy care and charge.

"And now, according to the inward travail of my soul, a day of visitation is come upon thee from the Lord; and his secret and Divine power hath reached thy heart, and hath as it were shook the earthly foundations; that that which cannot be shaken might be manifested. And in this tender visitation of God to thy soul, doth my soul rejoice; but my joy is

mixed with fear and with a godly jealousy, lest thou shouldst, notwithstanding, be beguiled of the inheritance prepared for the faithful. And therefore, that I may clear my conscience in God's sight, and answer the tender operations of love, which I feel in my heart towards thee, let me exhort thee to faithfulness to the love of God, so manifest unto thee.

"And, *First*, I say with the prophet: *Despise not the day of small things, nor the Branch that springs out of a dry ground;* for He whose visage is more marred than any man's, is the Fountain of Treasure to them that believe and obey Him. For although the Truth doth not appear in such forms, styles, and methods, and with such drest up articles, confessions, and creeds, as the divers invented ways of men have done, whose mountains have all of them had hands, first to make them, and then to defend them; yet this stone which is cut out of this mountain, and without hands, will in time break down the images, the carved, the graven, and the molten work of men's hands; and then increase and fill the whole earth.

"Therefore, I say again, despise not the simple, plain appearance of the Light of Christ

in the conscience, as a low thing, and a mean dispensation; for through it is the knowledge of the Father and of the Son, unto eternal life, in all them that believe and obey it; and those that say it is a low and mean thing, let them first learn to be obedient to it, in all its requirings, reprovings, and discoveries. And this will stop the mouths of all opposers, who are finding fault with it, as low and mean, and yet walk not up to it.

"*Secondly*, Beware of that which would exalt itself in the vision of heavenly things, and take the vision for a possession, as too, too many have done; but in times of openings and discoveries, keep low, and be of a plain and single heart before the Lord. For vision is for encouragement, and not for exaltation. But whosoever makes images of those things which they have seen in heaven, will also bow down to them, and endeavour to make others bow too; and thence comes a worse Babel, and a worse idolatry, than that which is set up among them who never yet saw into heaven, and so only can make images of things on earth, and bow and cause others to bow thereunto. Therefore, if the Lord enlarge thy sight of Divine things, by his Divine, pure Spirit

and Light in thy inward parts, walk humbly before Him, in lowliness and fear, that thou mayst feel his gentle leadings, to lead thee into the enjoyment and possession of what thou hast seen; that thou then mayst witness forth his praise to the sons and daughters of men.

"*Thirdly*, Beware of thy own will, which would run hastily forth after those things which, in and by the will of man, cannot be attained; but watch diligently to know thy own will subject to the will of God in all things; for it is not lawful for us to will those things of ourselves, which are good in themselves; but to possess our souls in patience, supported in faith, believing that, in God's due time, we shall reap, if we faint not. And if the saints had need of patience to wait for the promise, when they had done the will of God, how much need have such to be patient, and to watch the hasty will, who would have the promise, and the power, and peace, and rest, &c. when they are yet far short of having done the will of God!

"And *Fourthly*, Let no man deceive thee, either by puffing thee up, or casting thee down; for it is the Lord that knows the heart,

and not only knows it, but discovereth it; and his discovery is true, and ought to be believed. And no better or worse is any one's state, than just so as it is represented to them by the pure Divine Light of Christ Jesus, in their own consciences. And whoever represent them better or worse, are deceivers, or mistaken guides.

"This is the standard of true knowledge and judgment, that we all must make use of to believe, and be subject to, whenever we would take a true measure of ourselves. This is He that said to some: *I have a few things against thee*, and to others, *I have a many things against thee, &c.* And this is the Minister of the tabernacle of God that is with men, who deals out to every one their proper portion, according to their state, and present condition. This is the voice of the Son, by whom God now speaks, and whom all must hear; and they that hear Him live. He hath power to cast down and to raise up, to wound and to heal, to kill and make alive; and so hath no man. Therefore wait upon Him with an upright mind; and wherein thou hast at any time been unfaithful, He will shew it, and give thee repentance unto life, and heal thy backsliding,

and at last shew thee the consolation of her whose warfare is accomplished. But it must be accomplished in thee first, and that by his Divine assistance, and through pure judgment; for Sion was always redeemed with judgments, and her converts with righteousness.

"*Fifthly*, Beware of the friendship of this world; for it is destructive to the work of God, and is oppressive to his seed; and when his seed cries to Him, from under the oppression of the spirit of this world, the Lord will hear, and visit thee in judgment for his seed's sake; and thou wilt want that inward comfort thy soul desires. For in the world's friendship, lodgeth very hiddenly the real enmity against God. So that when we came but to break off from the outward forms and tokens of the world's friendship, the enmity wrought mightily against us; but the Lord hath crowned his faithful seed and people, with dominion and power, and slain the enmity, and led captivity captive: glory be to Him for ever and ever!

"And for this cause is the love of God shed abroad in thy heart, that it might overcome

the enmity, and that wherein it lodgeth; that thy soul might reign, through a death to the world and its glory over the world, and over the spirit that rules in it; and might tread down the vanity and emptiness thereof, in the dominion of the just; not regarding, but despising the shame and reproach that belong to the Gospel, and the present tribulations that may attend it; which are but for a moment, as knowing that they work for the faithful, a far more exceeding weight of glory. So keep thy eye to the recompense, and to the crown, which God the Righteous Judge shall give in that day; when sheep and goats, lovers of this world, and lovers of Christ more than all, shall be separated one from another; and the world's lovers shall perish with the world, and Christ's true lovers shall reign with Him for evermore.

Sixthly, Let thy power which God hath given thee in the earth, shine forth in righteousness, in mercy, and in truth; for, for that end art thou called, to set forth a good example in the administration of justice, and easing the oppressed; encouraging them that do well, and being a terror to all evil doers. For that end is power in thy hand, that the giver of it

may be honoured; and them that honour God, God will honour. Therefore wait for wisdom's voice, by whom princes decree justice in the earth, and she will be thy great counsellor. And know this, that the glorious power of God, by which thy heart and soul is enlightened and quickened, comes not to destroy rule and order in the earth, but to establish justice and righteousness, and take away oppression and violence, and the hard heart; that his name may be feared and dreaded on the earth by the sons of men; and his power over all may have dominion.

"Thus, dear friend, have I in simplicity and uprightness, discharged what lay upon me in great plainness and openness of heart; desiring the Lord God Almighty may be thy director in all things, and that thou, in the innocent seed of Life, mayst be able to understand in thy day, the things of thy peace, and mayst become an instrument of his praise in the earth, and for the setting forth his great name; and in the end, mayst have thy portion with the redeemed and sanctified believers and members of that holy Head, Jesus Christ, for evermore.

"So I remain a lover of thy soul, and of the souls of all men, but especially of such who are come to a travail in Sion's travail; among whom give the salutation of my tender love to the Church of Holland, and so many as in measure are made partakers of the precious faith that is in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom farewell.

"STEPHEN CRISP."*

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* The reader of the foregoing Epistle will be interested in knowing how it was received by the illustrious person to whom it was addressed. During the progress of this work through the press, I have obtained a copy of the *original* letter from the Princess Elizabeth, in reply to the address of Stephen Crisp; which I here insert. It affords additional testimony to the well-known piety and humility of that eminently Christian Princess.

FROM THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH PALATINE OF THE RHINE, TO STEPHEN CRISP.

"*The 2nd of May.*

"Your good wishes for our family, and intentions to come and see me, are very acceptable. What could not be performed this time, may be in another season; and in the mean while, I shall endeavour to practise your lessons, as God shall afford me strength.

No. 28. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp, to be read in the Women's Meetings of Friends in Ipswich.* 1674.—5 *pages.*

This Epistle contains some useful advice, for the regulation and general conduct of the Meetings held by Women Friends, for the Christian care of their own sex.

It was probably written during the writer's Travels in Holland and the Netherlands, where he passed nearly the whole of the year 1773, and several months of the year 1774.

"I have been out of my native country above 19 years, and knew not what passed there. If my brother did refuse protection unto godly persons, it is ill for him; but the better for them to have no share in the desolation of that poor, ruined country. God will gather all that live in obedience to Him, where and when He pleases.

"I recommend to your prayers, one that loves all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, named your unknown friend in Him,

"ELIZABETH."

The following extract is not less adapted to the present than to past times.

"And my friends, above all things, live in the fear of God, and in love and tenderness one towards another; and let not the enemy that lies in wait to destroy, break the band of your peace; for while ye keep the peace of God unbroken, ye can communicate one to another of the gifts and grace of God, and so will daily feel a being the better one for another; which will beget a dearness and esteem in you one towards one another. And in that dearness and tenderness meet together about the Lord's work, seeking with one consent to exalt the name of the Lord, and to honour it above your own merits. And let none seek exaltation; but know this, that the humblest and most self-denying, is most highly honoured of God, and fittest to do Him service; and they that are most long-suffering and patient, are most like to Christ the Head; and in such his virtue will shine, and so make itself known.

"And, friends, have a care in your Meetings, to give due honour unto every member in the body, remembering none are useless;

but stir up one another in their proper service in the house of God, and let not the foot be troubled that it is not a hand, nor the hand that it is not an eye; but every one give thanks, that by the grace of God you are what you are; and be faithful in your place and service, that ye may witness a growth. And in your meeting together, wait to feel the rising of the Life, and opening of the wisdom of God in one another. And let that speak and propound things needful and necessary for your welfare, and the welfare of the Church."

No. 29. "*An Epistle of tender counsel and advice to all that have believed the Truth every where, to exhort them to faithfulness thereunto.*" 1680.—21 *pages.*

This, and several succeeding Epistles, prove that the paternal care which the Writer had over the Society, was in no degree diminished in his advancing years.

I shall make copious extracts from this Epistle. The sound Christian advice which it conveys, deserves to be very seriously considered in these days of ease and prosperity.

After an Introduction, full of Gospel love, he thus proceeds:

"Although my outward man is so far decayed, that I cannot travel so much as I used to do, insomuch, that I know that many of you, among whom I have travelled in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, will see my face no more; yet my travail in spirit is not lessened, nor my love to you, the Lord's people. But my cries are day and night to the Lord, that ye may be preserved blameless unto the day of his coming; and that ye may be armed with power, and furnished with wisdom, and may be pre-

pared with every good gift of the Spirit, to stand against the wiles and subtle workings of Satan your adversary, who is upon his watch, which way he may destroy you, and spoil you of the lot of your inheritance, prepared for you in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"My dear friends, I would not have you forget, that there are many ways to weaken and to darken you, which must all be watched against; therefore walk circumspectly, keeping your eye in your head, waiting to feel your strength renewed daily. For, be assured, your trials and temptations will be renewed; and if you be destitute of the heavenly daily bread, there will be a daily weakening, which will appear by your being overcome by such things, as once you had a power to stand against, which is a great grief to behold in many.

"And now I come to warn you of a few things that have for some time lain upon me, to send among you; which I do, in faithfulness, recommend to the pure witness of God in all consciences, not as if I judged any; but this I must tell you, there is one that judgeth, and will give an answer in every one that

listens to Him, by which they may know how far any of these things have prevailed upon them; and he that judgeth, will also, by judgment, deliver them that are caught in Satan's snares, if they do hearken, and submit to his leadings.

"*First.* Take heed, my dear friends, of holding the Truth in a bare formality, satisfying yourselves that you have for a long time owned the way of Truth, and the assemblies of the Lord's people, and appeared as they have done in all outward things, and have hereby obtained the repute to be one of them; and under these considerations any sit down at ease, as to the inward man, unacquainted with the inward travails, either for thyself or others; unconcerned whether the noble plant grows, either in thyself or others.

"O my friends! this is a dangerous state, yea, more dangerous than my tongue or pen can declare; though, so far as to clear myself, and warn such, God will give me utterance. Therefore consider how thy poor soul is beguiled in this condition; for, in the first place, thou art deprived of that daily enjoyment which others do enjoy, in waiting upon the

Lord; they feel his refreshing presence, which either fills them with joy and comfort, or else opens their understandings in the light of a certain knowledge of, and testimony against, such things as yet stand in the way, and hinder the joy of his salvation from them.

"But thou that sittest in a dry formality, without an inward travail upon thy spirit, thou knowest neither of these things, but goest on in the dark, not knowing whither thou goest; and so, in the length of time, thou being such a stranger to the powerful workings of Truth in thyself, it grows to a question with thee, whether others do witness any such powerful workings, yea or nay; for every thing that is not experimental, is liable to question: as he that never saw, knows not what seeing is, and he that never smelt any thing, he knows not what smelling is: so he that through long continuance in this formal manner of going to Meetings, continues still unacquainted with the power, will at last be easily made to question whether there be such a power or not.

"And, in this state, the dark power will work insensibly, and prevail upon thy spirit, and fit thee for his own purpose, and will mi-

nister a secret liberty into thy mind, and a looseness, even as to the form itself, by degrees; and so will prepare thee against a time of some sharp, smart trial that will come to try thee, either in having something, or parting with something, which may be had or parted with, whether thou wilt turn thy back on Truth. And when this time of trial comes upon thee, then the strength and advantage that the enemy hath gotten upon thee, in the time of thy lukewarm, loose profession, is made manifest; then thou art in great straits for a season. If the temptation be in having a wife, or husband, or a portion, or legacy, or gaining a suit at law, or recovering a debt, or such like things,—and the things cannot be had without letting the testimony of thy profession fall; O! what struggling is there in thy soul to obtain the thing thou desirest; and yet wouldst fain be reckoned a friend still, and art loath to be publicly numbered among backsliders and apostates.

"And so, if the temptation and trial comes on the other side, in parting with any thing which thou lovest, for thy profession's sake, as thy wife and children, thy liberty,

thy money, thy cattle, thy house and land, or what else may be dear to thee; O! how doth self work to save itself; and loath it is to part with the name and reputation of a friend of Truth, and as loath to part with any of these things for the Truth's sake; not feeling the hundred-fold in this time, which Christ spoke of, nor the life everlasting either.

"Here is a day of great difficulty and distress, which is come, and is coming upon many of such careless professors; in which they do stand in need of the help of the Divine power of God to support them, and to give them victory; but, alas! they are estranged from it; and now the form will not support them in the hour of this great trial; but the flesh and blood's consultings are grown strong for want of living in the daily cross; and that nature cries aloud in the ears of thy soul, which thou hast indulged and suffered to live. And if thou considerest the Truth, and weighest the testimony of that against thy own will and desire, then thou easily seest which is of most weight with thee; for a false weight, and false balance, and false judgment, is got up in the time of thy careless profession; and then the old deceiver comes in, and tells thee, thou

seest no evil in it, or at least not so much as on the contrary side; so that of two evils, it is wisdom to choose the least.

"And such like reasonings fill thy mind, till at last, thy will being strong, and thy understanding darkened, thou takest up a resolution to hazard thy soul, and to part with thy dry, withered testimony, which thou hast for a long time borne without life, and embrace the price that is bidden for it, as Esau and Judas did; and so sellest the Truth which thou once followedst; and deliverest it, as much as in thee lieth, into the hands of its enemy, to be mocked, and reproached, and trampled upon. And this is the fruit and effect of a long carelessness and remissness, which thou thoughtest once would never have come to this.

"And when the servants of the Lord have declared what sad effects such negligence would produce in time, thou hast been apt to bless thyself, and to reckon thou wouldest never run so far out, as publicly to bring reproach upon the way thou professedest; but, alas! thou little knewest that thy soul's enemy was all that while but preparing thee against the day of thy greatest trial, and, as it were, un-

arming thee against the day of battle, that he might the more easily overcome thee. But now thou seest thou art fallen, when others being tried by the same temptations, stand and abide in their testimony; and so mightest thou also, if thou hadst waited upon God as thou oughtest, in diligence, for the renewing of thy strength.

"But now, alas! miserable man or woman, what wilt thou do! Thy cloak is now pulled off; thy fig-leaf profession is rent; and thou hast now but two ways, and well if there be so many, to wit, to turn thy mind from the object of thy delight, to the Truth which thou hast sold for it; and by repentance, and through judgment, to wait to see if God will be merciful to thee or not, and to spend thy days in sorrow and mourning, and to give up now at last to that work thou so much before slightedst; or else to take the other way, and that is, to go on in thy rebellion against the Light of Christ Jesus, and add sin to sin, until the custom of sin may take away the sense of judgment. And so thou mayst grow to a fleshly ease, and give over caring for thy future well-being; and, like the beast that perisheth, set

thy heart upon the things of this life for a little season, and then cometh the end.

"Thus thou who wert once called of God to an inheritance in his Light, must now have thy portion in the utter darkness; and thou that wert once called to have been a vessel of honour, art now become a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. O! my soul laments the condition of such; and glad would I be, if any of these careless professors of Truth might be awakened before it be too late."

"*A Second* thing that lies upon me to warn you all of, my dear friends, is, to watch against the spirit of this world; lest it drink up your spirits too much in an eager and greedy pursuit after the things of this world, which happens to several in divers manners, to their great hurt and damage; and the snare lies deep and hidden, under a subtle covering. For whereas it is the duty of every man to take care for his family, and to be diligent in the calling God hath set him in, and to improve such opportunities as God pleaseth to put into his hand; here the subtle enemy works to make the care immoderate; to turn the diligence to slackness; and the improving oppor-

tunities which God gives him, to a finding and searching out of opportunities, sometimes by indirect courses, and sometimes to the prejudice of thy neighbour; and all to try to satisfy a greedy desire after the heaping up of treasure in this world. And, through the earnestness of the affection that kindles daily more and more, after these things, a man comes, in time, to have the increase or decrease of these things to be the objects of his joy or sorrow, and then he is miserable; for joy or sorrow are the highest faculties of the mind, and ought to be pitched upon the highest objects, and not upon transitory things under the sun, *by which neither love nor hatred can be known.*

"But, alas! how are many cast down at losses, and lifted up at profits and gains! O my friends! take heed of this fickle and uncertain state, for while some have too much set their minds after the things of this world, they have erred from the faith, and have placed their trust in uncertain riches; and when they have taken their wings and fled away, their hope hath gone with them. Therefore, I beseech you, dear friends, have a care of suffering your spirits to be sharpened and

set on edge about these outward things; and take heed of enlarging your trades and trafficks beyond your ability, and beyond your capacity; for both these evils have been the ruin of some: for every one that hath ability, hath not capacity for great things, and every one that hath capacity, hath not ability; and where either of these are wanting, such ought to be content with such low and mean things as they are capable to manage, and able to reach, and not to bear themselves too much upon the one, and then seek by indirect means to make the other answerable. For no man knows the issue beforehand; and therefore, even in these things, every one ought to wait to know the guidance of the Lord, and to be subject unto his will, though in a cross to their own; as the apostle said concerning them that said: *We will go to yonder city, and we will buy and sell, and get gain.* Which were all lawful things in themselves; yet for this, saith he, you ought to have said, *If the Lord will.* So he that saith, I will increase my trade, and enlarge my adventures, that my gain may thereby be enlarged; even in this he ought to say, *If the Lord will.*

"O friends! wait to feel the governing hand of God in these things, to govern you in your affairs, that so He may really be acknowledged by you the Lord of earth, as well as heaven, the ruler of your tradings and dealings, as well as of your religion and profession.

"*Thirdly*. And, friends, I desire you remember that the crown of our profession was, that our *YEA WAS YEA*, and our *NAY WAS NAY*, and so it is still with all the faithful followers of the Truth; though too many have let in a false liberty since their first convincement, and have not that respect to their words which they ought to have; to the great dishonour of God, and grief of the righteous, and wounding their own souls. O! my friends, let this be amended by every one that hath been overtaken in it, as you regard the honour of God, your own prosperity, and the good of others. For many stumblings have hereby been laid in the way of some who had been near to Truth, and they have fallen and been lost; but they that laid the stumblings, will not be found clear of their blood in the day of the Lord's inquisition."

" Therefore the ways to prevent all such miscarriages, are to be taken notice of, and in the first place, that none run themselves into necessities by indirect courses; neither by overcharging themselves in trading, nor in buying more than they are able to compass—nor by suretiship, which makes a supposed debt, though uncertain, and therefore the more dangerous, because it may come upon you at unawares, before you are prepared for it. These things ought in wisdom to be prevented aforehand.

" Also every one that upon a just occasion doth borrow, and doth pass his word upon the reputation of Truth, by promise, bill, or obligation, ought, at the same time, to have something in his eye of most certainty, by which he shall be enabled to perform his word, and not to trust to returns of adventures, increase of crops, gains of trade, or others keeping their word with him, or any such like uncertainties; for if any do so, they may be in this snare of being unfaithful to their promise before they are aware. But although there is a kind of uncertainty in all these things below, yet where a man's truth and profession lies thus at pawn, and must be fetched

home or forfeited, there ought, as I said before, to be something most certain in such an one's eye, by which he may save his word; as money that he knows to be at his demand or goods in possession, or lands that are free, and can be engaged if the worst come; for you will find more peace in conscience, and a better answering of Truth, to make a new engagement of land or goods, than to break an old engagement of your truth and profession."

"*Fourthly*. And, friends, the next thing that lies upon me, is in respect unto such as have been brought up and educated amongst us, and are grown up, and do make profession of the same way and truth in which they have been educated. That all such may take heed that they rest not in a bare educable form of the Truth, without having regard to their inward travail of the soul, and to their growth in the power of godliness. For the snare of their soul's enemy lies deep in this matter; and his working is to draw their minds into the world, while their bodies and public profession remain amongst friends; and to keep them at ease and liberty from the daily cross, and from the crucifying power, by which they should travail, to subdue that nature in themselves that is grown up

in their youth, as well under this profession as under any other, where the power is not minded diligently.

"And by this means many are and remain unfitted for the *Testimony of Truth*, wanting to be rooted and grounded in it, through an experimental warfare in their own particulars. For, my friends, I say unto you in the word of the Lord: *Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God;* and if ye cannot see that, what availeth it what you see? For all sight, vision, and opening of things will not save nor deliver your souls in the day of trial that will come upon you for the trial of your faith; and then, if your faith be such an one as stands in words and terms, though never so true, yet it will fail you in that day; and you will not be able to stand.

"Therefore, dear friends, sink down in lowliness and humility, and wait to feel the power revealed in you, which was revealed in us in the beginning; and join your minds to it, in a living faith, that you may come to experience its condemning power, to judge every vain thought and exalted desire, and every idle word and evil action; that so, by the pure

judgment of Truth, you may come to witness a cleansing and a subduing of that nature, which lusteth unto disobedience of the righteous law of God in your hearts. And as that nature is kept under the daily cross, it will weaken and die daily in you; and the weaker it is made, the more you will feel of the powerful quickenings of the word of God in your souls; and a tender life will spring up in you, to your great comfort, that will be tender of the glory of God, and of the honour and reputation of your profession."

"Therefore prize your time, and examine yourselves, what reason you have in yourselves, to make profession of the name and way of God, more than that you were educated therein, and brought up to it by your parents, guardians, or masters. Have you ever felt the heavenly virtue of it overshadowing your souls? And if you have, do you retain and keep the savour of it still upon your spirits? Do you feel yourselves possest with that awe, fear, and reverence of the Lord's presence, which the Lord's people felt in the beginning of their day, and the faithful do still feel? Is the inward enjoyment of the life of Truth a greater joy to you than all your outward en-

joyments ? If so, then you will not sell it nor part with it, for any thing in this world. And the testimonies which such do bear for the Truth, will not be traditional, but from a sensible convincement in themselves; so that they will be able to say : *These things have we received from the Lord; and they are the testimonies of God manifest to us in the Light of his Son, Christ Jesus, in whom we have believed.*

" O friends ! how will this drive back the storm of temptations that will come both inwardly and outwardly, in a time of trouble ! How many are there, who, for want of this experimental assurance in themselves, have been brought to great questionings and doubtings, and knew not whether to go backward or forward ; and many have halted and staggered; and some have *fallen, and rise no more*, to the ruin of themselves and others. Therefore, my dear friends, trust not to the resolutions of your own spirits, without a sense of the power, nor to a receiving the Truth by your education; but all wait to be made living and true witnesses of the rising of the power in your own hearts, and the carrying on of the work of the power in yourselves, to the rege-

nerating you, and bringing you to that birth that trusteth in nothing but in the Lord alone, and hath Him for its support in the greatest exercises; then shall ye stand and remain, and be a generation chosen of God, to bear his name and testimony, and to commit it to the next generation.

"And, friends, let the brotherly love that was sown in your hearts, as a precious seed in your first convincement, continue and increase daily: that, as ye are made partakers of one hope of salvation in Christ Jesus, so ye may continue of one mind and heart, according to the working of his Spirit in you; having a tender respect one for another, as children of one Father, and as such as feed at one table. For Christ hath ordained, and doth ordain, in all his Churches, that we should love one another—that we should shun all occasions of offence and grief—that we should walk orderly, and as becomes his holy Gospel; that we may be an honour thereunto, and a strength and comfort to one another. This is our great ordinance, our new commandment, which was also from the beginning, and will always abide the same through all generations. Therefore, my friends and brethren, let the fruits of sin-

cere and brotherly love abound amongst you, both in word and deed; and let none be wanting in fulfilling the *Law of Charity*, without which all profession will be but *like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*.

" But if this law be kept to, the life of religion will be felt, and each one will thereby be taught their duty and charge concerning another, and know how to comfort in charity, to admonish in charity, to reprove in charity, and also to receive all these in charity: and this will exclude for ever all whispering and talebearing, and bring every one to deal plainly and uprightly with every one; not suffering sin to rest upon the soul of thy brother, but to deal with him quickly, plainly, and tenderly, even as thou thyself wouldst be dealt withal. And however this kind of dealing be taken, thou shalt not miss of thy reward; but thy peace will remain with thee. For while friends' eyes are fixed upon the power of God, as their guide and leader in all these things, and their design is simply God's glory, the clearing their own consciences, and the good of their brother, they will not be discouraged in their undertakings; for they know the power will certainly come over whatsoever

opposeth it; and this will keep your minds quiet and free from disturbances, when you see men, and things, and parties arise against the power, knowing that the power is an everlasting Rock. But as for those things that appear against it, they are but for a season, in which season patience must be exercised, and the counsel of wisdom stood in; and then you will be kept from staggering, or from scattering, by all the fair shews the spirit of opposition can make.

"For they that do enjoy the life and substance, and feed daily of the bread that comes down from heaven, have a quick sense and discerning of things that are presented to them; and do know them that are of the earth earthly, by their earthly savour, from those that are of the heavenly, with their heavenly savour. They know what feeds the head and the wit, and carnal reason, and what will nourish the immortal soul; and so come to be fixed; and are not ready to feed upon unsavoury food, nor to be easily tossed, nor to be troubled at evil tidings, nor can they be drawn after one thing or man by an affection, nor set against another man or thing by a prejudice; but the true balance of a sound judgment, set-

tled in the Divine knowledge, according to the measure that the Father hath bestowed, keeps such steady in their way, both in respect to their own testimony and conversation, and also in respect to their dealings with others.

"O my dear friends! in such doth the Truth shine; and such are the true followers of Christ, and they are worthy to be followed, because their way is as a shining light, shining on towards the perfect day. And in this sure and steady way, my soul's desire is, that you and I may walk, and continue walking, unto the end of our days, in all sobriety, truth, justice, righteousness, and charity; as good examples in our day, and comfortable precedents in our end, to them that shall remain; that so we may deliver over all the testimonies of our Lord Jesus unto succeeding generations, as pure, as certain, and as innocent, as we received them in the beginning; and in the end of all our labours, travails, trials, and exercises, may lay down our heads in that Sabbath of rest which remains always for the Lord's people.

No. 30. "*An Epistle from S. Crisp to Friends at Dantzick.* 1680.—4 *pages.*

I present this excellent Epistle to the reader uncurtailed.

"*Amsterdam, this* 19*th Fifth Month,* 1680.

"Dear Friends,

"In the fellowship of that life that was before death was, do I dearly salute you, praying to the God and Father of Life, that ye may livingly be made sensible of the increase of his power, grace, and virtue, from day to day; that as your trials and tribulations abound, you may really feel that seed in yourselves, for whose sake the trials and persecutions come; for it was and is the seed birth of life, that was and is persecuted and afflicted in all ages, as it is said: Against thy holy child Jesus have they done all these things. For you know, my friends, that before this birth in some measure did appear, you were at peace with the world, and the world with you; but when ye were turned from darkness to light, then the dark power began to work against you, and

it doth still work, and will work so long as its hour lasteth.

"And what is the work thereof? Is it not to draw or drive you again to darkness, from the light to falsehood—to hypocrisy from truth—to death from life; all which, in the light of life, you comprehend and discern; and by the operation of that love to God, which He hath shed into your hearts by the Spirit of his Son, you are upholden and preserved in your testimony unto this day; and by the faith which God hath given you, you have the evidence of things you do not yet see, and do enjoy the substance of the things you hope for, even immortality and eternal life; the first-fruits whereof, as an earnest, are revealed by his Spirit in your inward parts. And by this faith it is that we know God will put the Seed's enemies under his feet, both inward and outward, according to his promise. But, friends, it is not the part of him that is a true believer to make haste; but to leave the times, seasons, ways, and means, to the Lord alone, whose will is to be done in earth as in heaven; and shall be done over all his enemies.

"Therefore, dear friends, stand given up in the will of your God, who hath chosen and called you to make known his Name and power in you, and to let all his enemies know that He is able to support his children in the greatest exercises; by which his Name, in due time, by others shall be acknowledged, as it is among you this day; for whose sake others have formerly suffered and laboured.

"And, dear friends, keep your eye to the power of God, to which all things are possible; and look not too much upon the power of death and darkness; for if you do, you will be captivated in the natural sense, and so will be weakened; but being diligently waiting upon God in the light of his Son, in whom He hath appeared to you, you will be so confirmed in the faith of his power, that you will be able to believe beyond what your natural sense can comprehend. And then will you feel the life of the true Christians in all ages of Christendom, in which they have overcome and trampled upon all manner of sufferings, and even death itself: for, alas! my friends, what is this life—what is this breath—what is this time that we have here on earth—but something

given us of God, wherewith He hath ordained that we should glorify Him?

" And if we love this life, and the things of it, so much as not to part with it and them for his Name's sake, then are we unworthy of Him; but, my friends, you have seen how the Lord your God hath dealt graciously with you; and hath not, in a long time of suffering, permitted the fierce waves to devour you; but that both you and your testimony are kept alive unto this day, by a secret Divine power: and it shall live, and outlive your adversaries. Therefore be of good courage: the cause in which you are engaged is the Lord Jehovah's, who will arise for his Name's sake, in his own time, way, and manner. So you need not to take care how worm Jacob shall arise; your care is only to be faithful to what God hath made manifest to you, to keep your consciences free, though you should be bound; that your witness may live, though you should die: the Lord knows how to raise his seed, and to support his servants.

" And, my friends, this I must say unto you, that, since I came hither, I have been truly

refreshed in the account I have had out of your letters; and my heart is drawn forth in tender love to you: and were my body able to sustain travel as it hath been, I should, I believe, come to see your faces; but I am much decayed in body: howbeit my spirit is at liberty, through the grace I have received of God, in which I both rejoice and suffer with the flock and heritage of God every where. And this, my dear friends, I lay upon you in the Name of the Lord, even the same that our Lord hath laid upon us all, to wit, that ye love one another with sincere love; and that ye be of one mind, in all humility, bearing each other's burdens, and washing each other's feet, when need requires; and be a strength one to another, according to the ability which God hath given you, that so none may be lost by means of any one's laying stumbling-blocks in their way; but that if any will wilfully turn back, and cause the offence of the cross to cease, for the sake whereof you suffer tribulation, their condemnation may be wholly upon their own heads, and you may be kept perfectly clear of their blood. So the God of peace, and of mercy, be with you, and multiply his blessing

upon you, and shine into all your souls, in the glorious manifestations of his presence, to your joy and comfort. Amen.

"*Your friend and brother in the tribulations and patience of Christ, the Head of the true body, which is his Church.*

"STEPHEN CRISP."

No. 31. "*A Babylonish Opposer of Truth, by the Truth reproved.* 1681.—15 *pages.*

This Tract is stated to be in answer to "An impertinent paper sent abroad by Thomas Crisp." The Writer of this paper was one of the leaders who opposed the establishment of the Discipline, as limiting the operation of the Spirit in each member, and leading to an implicit subjection, or blind obedience to the ruling party (which he calls Foxonians) in the Society.

The paper appears to have been devoted to this point, and to have contained several misrepresentations of the conduct of the Society.

The Writer, it appears, attributes the establishment of that order in the Society, which the Discipline was intended to preserve, to ambitious motives, and to a *Popish* spirit. From the manner in which he has done this, our Author considers him as intending to favour the opinions which at that time prevailed, that the Society was in a secret confederacy with the Church of Rome, and so encouraging that persecution which its members had so unmeritedly suffered as Popish Recusants.

It is probable the Reply might be useful at the time it was published; but it contains little that is interesting to a modern reader.

No. 32. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp to Friends in Norwich.* 1682.—5 *pages.*

This Letter appears to have been written in a time of persecution: and the following extract will not, I think, be unacceptable.

"He that hath given you to believe in his Name, will also give you power to suffer; that so, through patient enduring your part in the sufferings and tribulations of the body of Christ, ye may plentifully partake of the joy and glory that is afterwards to be revealed. For as many of you as abide faithful in the time of these light afflictions, will see a far more exceeding weight of glory brought forth, and shall feel your share and portion in it.

"Therefore, my dear friends, look not out at Satan nor his instruments; but comprehend them in the light of your Saviour; and you will see them limited as the sea, that thus far

shall they go, and no farther. And so far as they have power to go, let no man grudge it, but acknowledge, as our Lord did in the day of his sufferings, when brought before Pilate: *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given from above.* So keep your eye to that which is above all Herods, Pilates, Judases, and the High-priests, to the Eternal Power by which you were called of God, to bear a testimony for his Name in your day. And as long as ye feel this power sustaining you, ye cannot be weary; but rather rejoice, yea, leap for joy; considering the crown of your calling, and that ye are counted worthy to suffer for the name's sake of Him that died for us, and that is risen again, and reigneth for evermore. And if we suffer with Him, and abide faithful to the end, we know that we shall reign with Him for ever; and not only so, but even in this life, He will make a way and deliver his people, and crown them with victory, after their sufficient trials.

"And as concerning the outward goods and sustenance of this life, dear friends, observe the command of our Lord, to take care but for one day at once, and He will give sufficient for that. For his purpose is to wean you from

the visible dependencies, that ye may, with the more brightness and clearness, embrace the true riches. Therefore it will be good for every one to contract all their outward affairs, into as narrow a compass as may be, and to owe to no man any thing but love, and to let that have a free passage, even to their persecutors; that so, with a clear and a free spirit, you may behold all things here below, without joy in their increase, or sorrow in their decrease; giving up yourselves and yours into the hand of God, who cares for you, and who hath not let forth the wrath of man upon you in his anger, but for the trial of your faith, which is more precious than gold or outward goods. And as for them, the loss will be rewarded in this time, a hundred-fold, besides an inestimable treasure laid up in heaven.

"So God Almighty keep you low and tender of his glory, and furnish you with patience, wisdom, and with every good work."

No. 33. "*An Epistle from S. Crisp to Friends in Amsterdam.* 1684.—3 *pages.*

This is a short Epistle of Christian caution and advice.

No. 34. "*A Faithful Warning and Exhortation to Friends, to beware of Seducing Spirits, &c.* 1684.—17 *pages.*

This is an important and valuable Tract. It refers to the schism which had taken place in the Society, and shows the origin and objects of the establishment of the Discipline.

The Author ably traces some of the causes of the corruption of primitive Christianity; and warns his fellow members against those "devices of Satan," which he states to have been so fatal to the primitive Church.

I have made copious extracts from this Epistle.

"*Dear Friends,*

"You know how that God in his infinite love hath visited us with a very glorious day, in which his Sun of Righteousness is so risen upon us, that the heavenly warmth thereof hath quickened and enlightened us, and made us to stand up and serve Him in our day and generation; and the virtue of that blessed life in Christ Jesus, being revealed in the souls of them that have truly believed, hath given them great power over death, and hath made them able to grapple with Satan in all his divers appearances, and to overcome him. So that which way soever he hath hitherto sought to eclipse the glory and brightness of this great and notable day of the Lord, he hath hitherto been frustrated in his purpose, and his instruments have been made ashamed of their work; for all that are true children of the day, do find that their standing is by faith, and not by knowledge; and are, by their faith, kept in a holy dependence upon the power of Him that can overcome all things, and bring them under. So that whatever doth arise against the Truth, the faith of them that are in it lets them, even in the beginning of it, see to the end of

it, and gives them a certainty in themselves, by which they are settled in patient and quiet waiting to see the thing they believe brought to pass; and this is their victory, even their faith: and they who dwell in this faith are not weary, neither do they faint in all the various exercises they meet withal by the way; but can endure contradiction without discouragement, knowing that whatever it is that riseth up against the power and purpose of God shall in time be laid low.

"And this is the same faith that was once delivered to the saints in the primitive days, when Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, was preached unto them; in whom they believed, and by whom they were enabled both to do and to suffer what his will was, and to withstand the torrent and sea of contradictions they then met withal. And the word of God grew mightily; and their zeal and courage grew for the Name of God; so that no stratagem devised against them could prosper, as long as they kept in the simplicity of the Gospel, and held their faith which they had in a pure conscience. Here were their great fortifications, that made them so prevalent and immutable, viz. *simplicity* and *cleanness of mind*;

and as long as these continued, they continued of one heart and mind, glorifying God, and building up one another, and comforting one another, and were as epistles written in one another's hearts.

"Now when Satan saw that it was impossible to stop this glorious work of God by all he could do, by stirring up the priests and rulers against them, but that their strength was in the Lord, they standing in their simplicity and pureness of mind; then the adversary sought out ways, means, and instruments, how to disturb their progress, by drawing one or other among themselves from that simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, in which they had been of one heart, and had believed and practised the same things without vain disputations; and having found some unstable souls fit for his purpose, he wrought powerfully in them to move questions, which had a tendency to draw others forth to striving about the question.

"Then one would have it thus, and the other would maintain it to be so; neither of them minding whether the question itself tended to the use of edifying the Church; but a great

stir was quickly raised, and that about some few Jewish rights, and about some right and wrong descents of genealogies; one would prove it thus, and the other so. And here was a door opened to let in the carnal wisdom, to be the weapons of this war, by which the pure innocent minds of many were corrupted, and some whole households subverted; which, when Satan had thus far prevailed, he went on further, and gave courage to some of these his high-minded, heady, unruly servants, to go abroad throughout the Churches, and preach up these his questions as doctrines, and to seduce and draw away all they could from the simplicity of the Gospel.

"And these were so prevalent as to bewitch and betray many; so that they were emboldened to withstand the true apostles, in that glorious work in which Christ Jesus had employed them. So that now a great deal of their work was to warn the poor flock of Christ of these wolves in sheep's clothing, and to give out testimonies of their own sincerity, and against these deceitful workers; and to open and unfold the mysterious working of that evil spirit, and how it wrought cunningly to make void the offence of the cross, that they

might carry on the name and outward profession of Christianity, with more reputation and less reproach than at the first; for this was the design, to get the Christians into a false liberty, and to loosen their hearts from that sincerity and watchfulness which was taught them in the beginning. And to what a height the subtle serpent carried on his work in that day, you may read at large in the Scriptures of Truth; and what sad and woful work it made in Corinth, in Galatia, in Smyrna, in Thyatira, and in Laodicea, and also in Achaia; and what sorrow and labour it cost the good Apostles, and how the good Spirit was grieved by these things, and the hearts of the righteous made sad thereby.

Yet the enemy had, in those days, another stratagem as bad as all the rest, whereby he sought to lay waste the work of God; for after the Gospel came to spread abroad, and many were convinced, both Jews and Gentiles, many Greeks also came to acknowledge the Truth, who had been great seekers after natural wisdom, and had sought to fathom natural causes and effects, and had studied many curious arts, and philosophical strains and methods, which suited well with their heathenish

worship and religion, for them to endeavour to find out the benevolent or malevolent influences of Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, or the other of the gods whom they worshipped. But when they came to the acknowledgment of the one only true and living God, the Creator of all, and of Jesus Christ whom He had sent, then they found their curious arts needless, and their books fit for nothing but the fire; and they burnt in one city as many as were worth 50,000 pieces of silver. But, alas! the spirit that made use of them was not burnt in several, but wrought cunningly to bring in many of those their tricks and quirks among the poor believers, and endeavoured to make them believe they were such knowing men and had such rare things to make them acquainted with, far beyond the Apostles. And then they went to work with the opposition of science, as they falsely called it; and then things must be questioned and disputed that had not a philosophic or natural reason, to demonstrate to the senses or understanding; and hereby was the faith of some made void, and many were spoiled of their sincerity and uprightness by these vain deceits, and then came in looseness in conversation. Then a Nicholas with his Ranterism—a Jezabel with her pretended

loose and wanton prophecies—a Balaam with his covetous design upon the people, might find some to side with them; for the holy tye and covenant of their religion of bearing a daily cross was broken: but, alas! alas! the effect of these things was very lamentable.

"And, dear friends, having briefly touched at these things, and before you set these proceedings of Satan against the Truth among the primitive Christians, I now come to tell you in great plainness and sincerity what hath for some months lain upon my mind relating to this subject, and concerning the day in which we live, and the Dispensation of that everlasting Gospel which is now preached again unto us, in which we found the very same blessed effects as they did. For when we had believed therein, it brought us into great simplicity, and into cleanness of mind, and into an unfeigned love and unity one with another; and from what parts or countries soever we came, we all spake the same things; and the quirking, querying, disputing wit, was brought down, and cast out from among us.

"Though we could query and dispute the opposers that were without in defence of the

Truth, yet we had then no such occasion among them that professed Truth; for we were of one heart, and mind, and judgment; and, in that universal love, we laboured to build up one another in our most holy faith, and to publish and make known the blessed Name of Jesus, in whom we had believed; and many were daily added to the Church, and came to partake of the same faith and of the same love, and grew into the same simplicity of mind, wherein we found a harmonious rejoicing in spirit whenever we saw one another. In this state did the Truth preserve us; and our faith was firm in that name and power by which we were called, that the Lord would go before us, and prosper us in his blessed way; in which He caused our souls to take great delight, and take up the daily cross cheerfully, and deny ourselves for the sake of Him that had called us.

"But the old Enemy of Truth envied this our tranquillity quickly, and began to work in some where he found a ground to work in, and sought to lead them from the simplicity of the Truth, and to exalt their minds in the sight of things opened by the Truth. And so these did not abide in the tender fear of God, and in the

humility of the innocent Seed, but flew up in airy notions and imaginations, some into a false liberty, and others into strange imaginations of their own growth to some high state; and so grew heady and unruly, and were hardened against exhortations, rather judging themselves fit to teach, than to be taught. And these drew several after them through an affection that was not subject to the cross; and became an occasion of offence and stumbling to many who were enquiring after the way of the Lord, and a great exercise and sorrow to such as kept in the travail and labour for Sion's redemption.

"But those that abode in the faith, knew that the power in which they had believed would arise, and crush down and bruise under that lofty, airy spirit, and all that abode in it, and did not repent and return to their first love, and do their first works. And according as we believed it came to pass, and their works with which they sought to amuse and astonish the nations, were confounded and brought to nought; and divers that did adhere and cleave to that spirit, were lost and scattered, and grew into profaneness and uncleanness, and strove against the Power of God, that wrought

in his people, to reclaim and regain them; till, at length, the very Power of God turned against them, and cut them off who had been the troublers.

"Yet did not the Serpent leave off attempting to betray the innocent; but found out other instruments fit for his purpose, whom he raised up under pretence of some new discoveries, accompanied with a voluntary humility, and a seeming self-denial; when, indeed, the design was to exalt self and man's work, wit, and reason, above the Eternal Power of God, and through feigned pretences to obtain a dominion over the heritage of God; and to impose and obtrude upon them things which were not taught by the living Spirit of Christ Jesus in themselves, nor had been received by doctrine or message from the true spiritual labourers in the Gospel. By which means the minds of many were betrayed, and they were exercised in contending about some outward signs or tokens of their separation; till the weighty matter they should have minded, viz. *how to be kept in the love of God, and in the heavenly unity*, was in many lost and forgotten; and instead thereof, a secret root of bitterness grew up, and a hatred against the

prosperity of the Church of God, and the faithful servants and ministers of it; insomuch that they lost the very sense of God's blessed presence amongst us, and reckoned He had forsaken us.

"And thereupon many of them also forsook us, and were as another people; and were puffed up with great expectations of our downfall, and their own exaltation; and began to spread their design of separation into other nations, to the hurt of many who were deceived by them. So that the tender love of God, that had wrought in the hearts of the faithful labourers and ministers of the Gospel, to the gathering them out of the world, now wrought again effectually, to gather many of them out of this self-separation; and with great patience and long-suffering, did we travail and labour with many. And the Lord beheld our sincerity and care, and blessed his work in our hand; so that the eyes of many were opened to see the crafty snares by which they were entangled; and power was given them of God, to break through and testify against the crafty wiles of them that had deceived them. And the Lord arose in his great and mighty power, in and among his people, and set an eternal judgment on the head of that

spirit, and its work of dissension and separation that it had wrought; and it could then proceed no further, but withered and came to nought: and those who wilfully resisted the offers of the love of God, and of his people, they grew more and more corrupt, and perished wholly from the way of the Lord, and the society of his people, and turned back, some into the world's worship and religions, others into the gross pollutions that are therein.

"And the Churches of Christ, who stood faithful and true to the leading of his Spirit, came to have rest from that extreme labour and travail which they had lain several years under, by reason of these things; and God fulfilled the prophecies of divers of his faithful servants, who by their faith had seen, and by the spirit had testified at the beginning of that spirit's work, what the end of it should be; for many there were who saw, *that it was from the earth, and thither it would return:* and there it was swallowed up, and all its substance. Then did the souls of the faithful give glory and honour to God, in whose hand is power and dominion; and He reigns on high in his strength, and is King of saints, and the defence of his Sion, now, henceforth, and for evermore.

"These exercises put and stirred up all the faithful to great vigilance and watchfulness, for the keeping the enemy out for the future, at least, as much as in them lay. And those that were faithful and ancient friends, both men and women, found it incumbent upon them to meet together to watch over the flock, and to see to the conversations of them who professed the Truth, that it might answer their professions; and where the contrary appeared, to deal with them, and to reclaim them if possible, or else to deny them, and to clear Truth and Friends of them and their disorderly courses. And in this good work the Lord blessed them, and shewed his presence among them, and gave them wisdom and understanding; and they took care of the widows and fatherless, of the poor and afflicted families among them; and had the care upon them concerning marriages, that none might come together in a disorderly manner, but that all things might be clear on either side, and the consent of parents might be obtained before marriage; and that all things might be kept in good order, and savoury in the sight of God and men.

"And divers epistles were written from several elder brethren, for their encouragement and

direction in this good work; for we knew it was God's work, and would tend to the limiting of loose and unruly Spirits, who sought liberty more than sincerity; and sensuality more than Christ's government, and their subjection to the Divine Power of God. And when some exalted spirits came to see unto what this work would tend, they took offence thereat, and sought to weaken the hands of the faithful friends in this good work, under pretence, *That all must be left to the witness of God; and if people did not find judgment in themselves for what they did, they must not be judged by others;* being themselves gone from Truth's judgment and hardened. Then they cried out of innovation and imposition, and such like.

"And hereupon were many again seduced and subverted, and drawn away from their steadfastness in the Truth, and began to appear against the good order of the Lord's people, and to reflect upon the godly care that lay upon them, with unhandsome and unsavoury speeches and writings, till a secret root of bitterness and enmity got into several that had been convinced. And, in this root, the enemy wrought with great craft and subtilty, to draw them from the blessed unity

that is in Christ Jesus, the true Head of the true Church, and brought them into many jealousies and groundless fears of an apostasy; while, in the mean time, he drew them so far to apostatize from their first love and first works, that they proceeded to expose friends, both in particular and in general, to the reproach and scorn of the world, as much as in them lay.

"All which was borne and suffered with much long-suffering and patience; and a great travail lay upon many to endeavour for the reducement of them that did thus oppose themselves; for we knew our sincerity, and knew that the Lord would stand by us, and bless our work and labour of love, and blast their work of enmity; and their striving against the Lord, and his blessed work in the hand of his innocent people, would not, nor could prosper. We doubted not at all, but He that had stood by us, and helped us from the beginning, would still stand by us, and give his Truth and people the victory over every tongue and pen that rose up in judgment against us; as He hath done to this day; and their work is manifest, and they can proceed no further. Blessed be his Name for ever.

"Now, dear friends, I have made this brief relation of the fore-mentioned passages, that they who are young in the Truth may see, and they who are older may be put in mind, how the old adversary of Truth hath already wrought in this our day, and what hath been the end and tendency of his work in all his various appearances, even as in the primitive days, to stop the bright shining of the Gospel, if he could. And whereas he is not able to do that, his next work is to see whom he may devour; that is, whom he may so ensnare and entrap with his subtle baits and gins, as that he may, first, *draw them from the simplicity of the Truth;* next, *into an exaltedness in knowledge;* then, *into prejudice and enmity against those that stand in the way to hinder their exalted notions;* and by this time he hath taught them to break the law of charity, and to think evilly of the upright, and to disesteem the blessed unity and fellowship that is in the Truth; and then they are fitted for schism and separation, upon one specious pretence or another. Therefore how watchful ought every one to be, for the keeping out this destroying spirit, which hath brought several already to that enmity and defiance to the Truth and people of God, that, if it had been told them

in the days of their tender convincement, they would have been ready to say with Hazael: *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do these things?*

"And, friends, know this for certain, that Satan is still working, and seeks to winnow you; and where there doth remain, after a long convincement, a lightness and an airiness in any, such are easily driven with his pernicious winds; and to this purpose he hath stirred up some in several cities and countries, such as he knows are fit for his purpose, who never knew a real mortification upon that earthly sensual wisdom that is from beneath; but have too much saved that alive in themselves, which God did, in their first convincement, pass a sentence of death upon. And these, as they cannot reach to a partaking of the life of Truth in themselves, no more can they reach or attain to the hidden mystery of the unity that the Lord's people have one with another in that life of Truth; but another life and a power they have; and in it they grow head-strong and fierce, despisers of them that are born of the Spirit; yea, they grow in wisdom from one degree to another, but it is neither pure nor peaceable, gentle, nor easy to be entreated.

By their fruits ye may know them ; for, from this wisdom are they often found starting some subtle and abstruse questions, to amuse the minds of the simple, and to cause the weak in the faith to err, and to draw away the unstable souls after them, as if they had brought forth some new discoveries ; and then here is work for disputing wits ; by all which the minds are drawn farther and farther from the true watchfulness, that becomes those who have such an enemy to deal withal.

"Hence it is that all those janglings are sprung about the forbidden fruit, *what it was, and whether good for food, or not good for food ;* upon which some have closed with that primitive and first error, with which Eve was ensnared, and have judged it *good for food ;* yea, and have fed upon it too, till their knowledge hath grown greater in the evil than in the good. Hence it is that another starts questions about the *mortality* or *immortality* of the *soul*. Another, *of the state of the soul after the death of the body, whether it abides a singular essence, or ceaseth to have any singular essence or being*. Another about the *state of the body after death*. Another about *how many bodies one and the same soul may*, or

must have, at sundry times. Another, *how long the wicked men or angels must endure the wrath of God for rebellion.* Another comes forth and says, *There is no such thing as wrath or anger in God, and all that is written thereof in the Holy Scriptures is but metaphorically spoken.* And many more such like phantasies and doting questions, doth this birth bring forth of the trial of your faith and steadfastness in the Truth, by which the enemy is, as I said, trying and winnowing, to see where he may meet with his own, and may deceive and draw away some from the faith and unity, and teach them some other way and doctrine besides the narrow way of regeneration.

"Now, my dear and well-beloved in the Lord, you are witnesses unto this day, in how great simplicity and plainness of speech we have preached the word of God among you, from the day the Lord sent us forth to this day. We came not unto you with enticing words, we needed not logical nor philosophical demonstrations; for our testimony had the demonstration and evidence of the Spirit of Truth in your hearts; and our words, or the word of God in our mouths, hath not altered nor changed unto this day, but re-

mains the same as it ever was. The great doctrine of the Gospel was and is Regeneration, without which there is no entrance. The only means and way to attain it, was and is that light and grace that comes by Jesus Christ; and sanctifies, and purifies, and brings to Him, by whom the entrance is ministered into the kingdom. These things have we declared; and these things ye have believed: and in this faith are many of our faithful brethren fallen asleep, and their precious souls are at rest with the Lord. And herein if ye abide steadfast to the end, ye shall do well.

"And as concerning all such who seek to trouble any of your minds with the things above mentioned, or any subtle and crafty questions, keep you your habitations in the power of God, and you will daily come more and more to discern the tendency of them; how it is a spirit that works against the cross, and seeks to cause the offence of it to cease, that they might bear a profession of Truth, and live in a loose conversation, without controul or judgment; and you will see them come to nought, like others before them.

"And for the carrying on this kind of libertinism, divers strange notions are hatched and spread about, to corrupt the minds of whom they can; for Satan, who is the author of them, knows well how to apply them to the advancement of his own kingdom; and for the easing or rather hardening the consciences of such who receive these things, that they may thereupon shake off the sense which sometime they had of the righteous judgment of God, and slight the judgment of his people, and give the reigns to their lusts and passions; and yet all the while make a profession and outside appearance among the innocent people of God.

"O friends! these are the blots and spots that are among us; these are they by whose means the holy Name of God is blasphemed, and his blessed pure way evil spoken of by many, and the hearts of the upright made sad from day to day: these are such as cost the apostle tears when he writ, *I told you of them before, and now tell you weeping; they are enemies to the cross of Christ.* These cause the feet of some to stumble, and others to perish from the way of the Lord; and yet, all the while, carry a secret bolster under them to

bear themselves upon, having let in a belief or supposition, either that there is *no such wrath and judgment to be expected from the hand of God*, as hath been largely spoken and written of by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the Gospel unto this day: *or, if there be wrath and judgment to be revealed, it will be but for a time, and then they shall be restored to glory and happiness: or, if they fall short of a due fitting and preparing for the kingdom of God on this side of the grave, it is no great matter; for they shall have other opportunities even in this world hereafter, when they shall be born in other bodies.*

"Some few secretly bolster themselves up, and endeavour to possess others, with the supposition or notion of the finite punishment of wicked men and devils in the world to come; as where the Holy Scriptures mention, *everlasting fire*—the sin against the Holy Ghost *never to be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come—eternal judgment—vengeance of eternal fire—the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever*, &c. as plainly declared by Christ and his holy apostles and

Gospel ministers, these they limit to only ages.

"Another bolsters himself up with a belief, *that if he doth evil, his hell is only here in his own conscience; but, when he leaves the world, all things will be as if they had not been, and the soul shall die with the body, and suffer an annihilation as well as the body, or shall be swallowed up out of all particularity, as a drop of water into the sea, so then what matter.* And this is the evil seedsman, sowing these cursed seeds of fleshly liberty and ranterism, even in our day; and hath prevailed upon some to their destruction; and they that are seduced, as the apostle saith, do *wax worse and worse*, seducing whom they can by these their pernicious ways; the consequences whereof are woful and lamentable to consider, and have cost me and many more great sorrow and grief."

"And, friends, to you who have not known the depths of Satan, I have a few things to offer to your serious consideration. *First*, You know in what manner you were convinced, and how your understandings were opened, and you were brought to the acknow-

ledgment of the Truth. Was it not by the shining of that true light of Christ Jesus in your souls, which, by its inward working, shewed you that your souls were made subject to a power of darkness, that had defiled them, and made them unfit for God to dwell in and to take delight in? Then you saw what a contrariety and disproportion there was between the pure Light and your impure souls; whereupon judgment from God was manifest for the curbing, limiting, and destroying of that power, which had thus defiled the minds and consciences.

"And when ye came to believe this judgment to be the very judgment of God, ye submitted to it, as right and due unto you; and as ye thus submitted to it, ye quickly found some power to withstand the temptations of the dark power that had captivated you. And did you not then feel your souls somewhat eased; and a hope raised, *that as ye abode faithful unto that Light, you might obtain power to withstand your soul's enemy in all his appearances?* So that the faith that was delivered unto you in the beginning, was, that your souls should be so sanctified, fitted, and prepared, as to become a habitation for God, and that

He would so strengthen you, that ye should be able to stand against Satan and his power, who sought to defile and destroy the soul. And they that have been diligent and kept this faith, have found it to be a shield and defence in the times of their trials and temptations. So that they have found victory by it; and their souls have come to know a deliverance from under the enemy's power, and have received ability to serve the Lord, and have felt the blessed freedom and liberty in the Truth, which they so much desired and longed for.

"Now, wherefore hath all this work been, to redeem the soul, and to convert it, and change it from under the dark power, and to bring it under the heavenly and glorious power of Christ Jesus? I ask them that have known this work. Was it only for a few days or years, that we are to continue here in these bodies? Or was it not the effect of the eternal love of God in Christ, that in Him our souls might be eternally happy? I know such as have truly known this travail, do know the soul to be more worth than the value and worth of the whole world, and they are not liable to the

seducements of such as would undervalue the soul.

"But, alas! there are too many that never knew what it was to travail for souls, neither in themselves nor in others; but have received a sight and knowledge of things at a distance, in a speculative way, as lookers on. And these having grown up into a profession by a sight, without a real work in themselves, are very ready to be seduced, and to seduce others; and, wanting the substance that never waxeth old, are always itching after some new thing, which for a time seems to be delightful to them, till a newer thing is presented; and then they are for that also; and so are always gadding and changing their ways, till at last they are, by the mastering subtilety of their soul's enemy, who hath power in such unstable minds, led back again into the world, or into divers sects, heats, and opinions, that are of the world; and a false liberty gets up in them, in which they grow heady and stubborn, and look upon every one that seeks to reclaim them as their enemy. And they let in hard and bitter thoughts against them; and the enemy fills them with prejudice; and in that state they seek for the failings of others, and feed

upon them as bread to strengthen themselves; and so grow more and more estranged from the innocent life that is in Jesus, and that He hath given for food for the children of the kingdom.

"O! this is a sad condition; and I have often with deep sorrow lamented the state of some to whose hands peradventure this may come, when I have seen what a good beginning they have made in the way of God, and have been as pleasant plants, and hopeful to bring forth much fruit to the honour of God, and comfort of his people, and especially to the comfort and salvation of their own immortal souls: and yet who, after some good progress made in the Lord's way, for want of a diligent watchfulness and keeping close to the daily cross, and the self-denial, have laid themselves open to the spoilers, who have cunningly got an entrance into them; some in the affectionate part—some in the wise reasoning part—some through sowing the seeds of prejudice—and some one way, and some another; and have beguiled them of the simplicity, and drawn them from the sincerity, that is in the Truth; and so they have both lost their first love, and their first work also.

"And of these some are so far dead, that they have lost all sense and feeling of that love of God that worketh in the hearts of his people, for the regaining of them; and to such I shall say little, but tell them, *My soul shall mourn for them in secret, until the Lord easeth my spirit concerning them.* But for the rest who do yet retain something of a love to the Lord's people, and have sometimes an ear yet open to hear counsel; to these I say, God hath put it into my heart to warn you, that ye strengthen those things that are ready to die, before the Lord appear against you for your hard words and hard thoughts; and come down in humility, and feel after the first tenderness and brokenness of heart which once you felt, and hold a fast to the Lord."

"And, friends, let me use yet one argument more with you, to persuade you to turn into the unity and fellowship of the Truth and power of God, in which ye sometimes took delight with us to walk in it; and that is an argument from your own experience, to wit, the feebleness that hath fallen upon many of you, since ye departed from the heavenly unity with your ancient friends and brethren.

What a decay of strength and courage in the bearing forth the several testimonies for the Name of Christ, as they were received from the beginning; and, by the faithful followers of Him, are to this day kept and accounted of, as of more worth than a little outward liberty or estate, or such like.

"But O! my friends, how is this tye loosened? And how is fleshly reasoning gotten up to shun the cross, and the sufferings that attend the Gospel, and an unreadiness in many to give up themselves for his Name's sake. So that they are as if they had lost their spiritual armour, and their fervent zeal and love to the Truth, and the testimonies of it, which once were dearer to them than their all in this transitory world. And it is indeed impossible that the love to God and his Truth should remain in its former strength, when the love to the brethren decays. They came together, and they will go together. And the want of this love to God and to his people, is the ground of declining Truth's testimony, and using indirect ways to shift and shun the sufferings that come for Truth's sake; by which the hands of Truth's enemies are strengthened, and many stumbling-blocks have been laid in

the way of the weak. I beseech you to consider these things, and lay them to heart, while there is a day and opportunity to return to your first love, and to your first zeal for the Truth."

No. 35. "*An Epistle from Stephen Crisp to Friends.*" 1685.—4 *pages.*

This is too good and too short to admit of curtailment.

"Dearly beloved friends and brethren in the everlasting fellowship, that stands in the Spirit of Christ Jesus, our one Head, I do at this time dearly and tenderly salute you, in a fresh and living remembrance of the precious unity and joy in the pure Spirit of Life, in which we have been mutually refreshed together in years past; when I, according to the will of God, travelled and laboured among you in my younger days with great consolation, rejoicing greatly in beholding your order and unity in the blessed Truth, in which ye prospered, and were as an army with banners in

the Lamb's host, who went forth conquering among you, and defending and preserving you, by his Almighty Power, from the manifold snares of Satan, that were laid for your feet. But you that are ancient can remember with joy, how you were kept steadfast and unmovable in the holy path of life, and in the blessed concord; being of one heart and mind, bent to serve the Lord and his blessed Truth. I say, the remembrance of these things is precious to me, and to you who retain the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ our Saviour.

"And, dear hearts, as ye have met with many assaults to break your blessed unity, so it is not to be expected, but that still your great adversary will go about, seeking whom he may devour. And he, knowing that your strength is not in yourselves, but in that Seed of life that hath in all ages broke his head, and overcome him in and for the faithful; therefore his work is to draw from that Seed, and from that sweet dependency upon it, into some strange ground, where you may be removed from your strength, and be made a prey to his net. And therefore, as that Seed is meek and lowly, if the adversary can but exalt any into the contrary

property, they are prepared for him. And as that Seed is not of this world, if he can draw any into the spirit of this world, they are prepared for him. And as that Seed is patient and long-suffering, if he can draw any into haste and passion, they are prepared for him.

"And as that Seed made himself of no reputation, and sought not honour in this world, if Satan can but draw any to affecting reputation and honour, they are prepared for him; and from hence come grindings, heart-burnings, back-bitings, jealousies, and mistrust—which gender strife and contentions—which break out into schisms and rents, under various pretences—which give room for the corrupt wit and wisdom that is from beneath, to raise disputes and janglings, that are not of God, but of the lusts; the ground of wars and contentions, which are hurtful to those concerned in them. But in Christ Jesus is our peace and tranquillity, in whom we have grown up to be a Church and body, to his honour and glory, and to our salvation; in whom we rejoice together, and have dominion over the works of the wicked one, in the particular, and in the general; and, by His power, have seen the counsels of the disobedient

brought to nought many a time; and He is the same still as ever He was. Therefore be ye not discouraged at any work of the enemy, which you see appearing; but keep in the Lamb's patience, and have faith in the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and be assured that his work in your hand shall prosper, as ye abide in his Spirit, which is unchangeable and invincible.

"And, dear friends, as concerning your present exercises that ye labour under, through discontents of some amongst you, let none faint in their minds, as if some strange thing had happened to you: let none be overcome with a zeal beyond sound judgment, but remember that the dominion belongs to the meek and innocent seed; which will guide you to be tender and condescending to the brethren of low degree, and to keep inviolable the law of charity, and to heal the broken and wounded, and to restore that which is hurried out of the way by temptation; making a difference between the tender hearted, and the wilful, and heady, fierce despisers, who are easily known by their fruits.

"And, dearly beloved, this is a windy day, or a day of winds, in which that which is in itself chaff will be blown away; and what the North wind doth not remove, will be driven with the East wind; and what persecution doth not cause to start presently, the winds of dissension and seducements will drive away: and many are lost already, and many more will be lost, who have lost the innocent and beautiful love that first shined among us, and made us amiable to one another. These having lost their first love, it is no marvel if the first works decay also.

"And hence come the self-love, and shunning the cross, and a desire after the worldly and fleshly liberty, in which many are entangled, and become enemies to the cross of Christ, and seek to make the offence of it to cease; by which an enmity doth arise against them that bear it, though it works under other specious pretences, whose end will be according to their work, and the day will declare and make it manifest.

"So, dear friends, in bowels of dear and tender love, having a little opened my heart unto you, as a remembrance of that ancient and

lasting love that hath abounded in my soul to you from the beginning, I bid you farewell in the Lord; and the God of Power keep you in the unity of his Spirit, and in pureness and cleanness of mind, serving the Truth, with one heart and mind; and keep down the captious wit, and carnal reasonings, and disputation for mastery in all your assemblies. And let the Divine sense rule your affairs, and the wisdom that comes from above, which ye may know by its being peaceable, as well as pure; and those that trust in this gift, need not strive nor be hasty, but wait in faith, and exercise their patience the appointed time of the Father; and they shall see the desire of their souls, and be satisfied. So the God of Power, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, keep and support you by his Divine comfortable presence, and direct you in his heavenly wisdom, to do his holy will in your day and generation, is the hearty supplication of

Your sincere and faithful friend and brother, in the kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus,

"STEPHEN CRISP."

No. 36. "*A Tender Visitation in the love of God, unto those people called French Protestants, wherever they are scattered, in this time of tribulation and persecution, raised against them by those called Roman Catholics, about matters of Religion.*" 1688.—18 *pages.*

The intercourse which our Author had held for many years with the Continent, made him better acquainted with the state of religious parties abroad, and probably more interested in the circumstances of the French Refugees, than might otherwise have been the case.

The whole of the letter will, I think, be read with interest.

"Friends, in the movings of God's love in my heart, I write unto you; and my prayer to God is, that He may, by his invisible power, open your hearts to receive a word of counsel which might tend to your eternal happiness.

"It is evident that you are great sufferers, and the fame thereof reached over many lands and countries, and hath occasioned many to take notice of your hard measure, and to compassionate your state and condition, and to reach

out a hand of charity to your relief and assistance, which is indeed a real fruit of true Christianity, and a duty that all Christians do owe one to another; yea, to do good to all men, and especially to the household of faith.

"And in this charity, I am drawn forth to visit you in these days of your distress, with these few lines of counsel and advice, which if you receive in sincerity, and with an humble mind, ye shall do well, and may reap some benefit by it.

"And first of all, let your minds be seriously exercised, to consider what is the cause of your sufferings, and why the Lord hath permitted these days of trial and hardship to come upon you. And, by the way, take notice, I dare not take upon me to be a judge over you, and to conclude that God is always angry with a people whom He permits to fall under great sufferings; no, far be it from me, for who hath suffered more than God's dear children in this world? Neither is suffering a certain token of being the children of God, for many suffer because they have provoked the Lord to anger by their disobedience to Him; and others suffer for the trial of their faith

and that they may be thereby the more purified and prepared, either to bear witness to his holy Name on earth among the children of men, or to possess his heavenly kingdom, into which nothing that is not purified and cleansed can enter.

"Now to which of these causes shall be ascribed your present sufferings, is best to be known and found out by the light of Truth in your own hearts and consciences. And doubtless so many of you as will please to sit down and seriously to consider your ways in time past, will come to an understanding how it stands between God and your own souls; for the Lord hath a faithful and true witness in the consciences of every one of you, that hath registered your doings from your childhood; and this will bring to your remembrance how you have walked before the Lord in the days of your prosperity and liberty in your own nation, when you sat under your own vines and fig-trees; how short you came in answering the loving-kindness of God—how little that light of understanding was prized, which God had bestowed upon you more than the rest of your nation.

"This will shew you that it was as abominable in the sight of God, for you to bow down and serve the lusts and passions of your own evil hearts, as it was for your neighbours to bow down and worship their images of stocks and stones. This will bring to mind the luxury and wantonness, the strife and emulation, that was among many of you, and how great a part of you pleased yourselves with a formality of religion, something differing from the rest of the nation; though your lives and conversations differed little from others, but too much liberty was taken to looseness and vanity, and to the lusts and concupiscence of the flesh. These things were a grief to the Spirit of God, while ye called upon Him in words, and dishonoured Him in your lives, and gave your adversaries occasion to speak evil of you, and of your religion; insomuch that it hath been the common report of strangers and travellers for a long time, that there was little difference to be found in the lives and conversations of Prostestants and Papists in France, till the day came they went to their several worships.

"O friends! where was the talent of knowledge all this while? For as you knew better

than others, and that more light had shined unto you; so should your conversations have shined forth beyond others in sobriety, in temperance, and in the fear of the Lord, to the honour of his holy Name amongst his enemies; and this would have stopped the mouths of gainsayers, more abundantly than all the scholastical and critical arguments formed by force of logic and rhetoric, or philosophy, either could or ever did.

"Now, friends, when these things come to be brought up in your remembrance by God's remembrancer in your consciences, shewing you your mis-spent time in days past, it will work you into humility, and prepare your hearts to say with Saul: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord will draw nigh to you in a strange land, even to as many as seek Him diligently; for all lands are alike to Him; and in every nation, and among every people, those that fear Him and work righteousness, are accepted with Him through Jesus Christ our Lord; for He teacheth the humble, saith David, and instructeth the meek in his ways.

"And I must tell you, friends, the reason why you are still such strangers to the inward and Divine teachings of God, is, because you are not humble enough, nor poor in spirit enough, and so do not know the necessity nor want ye have of it; but are heaping up teachers to yourselves, that may please the itching ear, and so are diverted from a diligent hearkening to the voice of God, who is a reprover in your own hearts. In the next place, it is expedient for you seriously to consider the cause for which your great sufferings come upon you; it may be you will say it is, because you cannot for conscience sake subscribe certain articles, nor perform and practise certain things, which you believe to be contrary to the mind of God, &c.

"You say well: but, my friends, if conscience must be hearkened to in these respects, pray why is there not as great need to answer it in your whole lives and conversations? So far as our consciences are illuminated, it is by the light of Christ, who lighteth every one that cometh into the world with the true Light; and so far as conscience is guided by this Light, and men suffer themselves to be governed by such an illuminated conscience

they are kept from every thing that offends God, by the same law of conscience, which is light: for the same light that convinceth my conscience, that it is sin to bow down to an idol, or worship a crucifix, the same convinceth me in my conscience, that it is a sin to lie, to swear, to commit fornication, yea, to speak so much as a vain and idle word, or to let any evil communication or foolish jesting proceed out of my mouth.

"What a blessing would this be to you, and what peace of conscience would it bring into your bosoms, if this rule were observed in your whole life and conversation! and surely the reason is the same; for if the dictates of truth in the conscience be, as you confess, to be followed in one thing, why not in all, especially so far as we are equally illuminated and convinced? And I would ask which of you is not as completely and fully satisfied in respect to your conscience, that drunkenness, swearing, lying, hypocrisy, pride, &c. are contrary to the holy will of the pure God, as bowing to an image or crucifix, or subscribing any superstitious articles whatsoever. And the same light of truth which discovereth the one, discovereth the other, as the apostle

saith: *Whatsoever is reprovable is made manifest by the light, for that which maketh manifest is light.*

"But, by the way, I must put you in mind of a diversity of working in the consciences of men, for all men do not make scruple of conscience in matters of religion from one and the same ground and cause; for if they did, all would be of the same mind with Christ and his apostles and the primitive believers, who, while they had their consciences all governed by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, continued together and were of one heart and mind. But there are three things principally that divert men's consciences from this universal rule of holiness, faith, and charity, and by these three means, people come to be led from the holiness, divided in their faiths, and broken in their charity; and I shall touch briefly upon these three, that so the searching inquiring soul may be somewhat helped to find, whether any of them have the rule and government of his conscience or not.

"1. The first is Education.

"2. Worldly Interest.

"3. The subjecting of the conscience to the government of other men, and thereby being made liable to their interest and passions.

"For the first, Education—it must be considered in a twofold consideration, good and bad; for good education hath a great prevalency upon the mind, as to doctrines, principles, and forms and modes of worship; but it doth not, alone, convey from the tutor to the pupil, the life and virtue of religion; that must be done by the immediate operation of the power and Spirit of Christ. And therefore it is the duty of every one, how good soever their education hath been, and how sound soever the principles are, that they have received, to wait for this Divine operation in their hearts, to season and sanctify them, and to fit them to bear a testimony to the truth which they have learned in words and terms; or else they will grow up in a formal, dead profession, and will want the oil in their own lamps, although their tutors might have it. And such, for want of the true life and virtue of religion in themselves, may make conscience of this or that form and mode of religion, in which they were educated; and may stand in a profession of such or such doctrines and

principles; and yet may be never the better for them as to the great and main end, namely, the sanctification of the soul, and reconciliation with God, which the most sound doctrines and principles alone will not do.

"And as to bad education, and being tutored and nursed up in the dark and erroneous ways of the world, that fallen man hath invented; this makes a conscience too, though corrupt and defiled through the darkness that is in them and their teachers. They grow stiff in their error, and set it up for truth, putting their darkness for light, and walking by the light of the fire of their own kindling, crying, Thus did our fore-fathers, and pleading antiquity for a cloak for error; which makes it not the better, but the worse. And these deceived consciences have commonly this property, that they will endeavour to make every one's conscience like their own, which if any cannot yield to, they are for destroying their bodies, which shews they are children of the destroyer, and do his works; of whom Christ our Lord prophesied, when he said, *They shall think they do God service when they kill you.* And still these will tell you it is their conscience; but by their works is manifest

what it is that hath the governance of such consciences; not the sweet Spirit of Christ Jesus, but the force of a corrupt education, nourished and strengthened by the daily motions of Satan.

"Another thing that seeks to take the government of some men's consciences, is worldly interest. These are men of no settled hearty religion, but allow themselves a latitude to square their consciences and professions to their worldly profits, pleasures, and advantages, and so are a sort of Christians without the cross of Christ; and consequently no disciples of Christ. For He said, *Unless a man take up his daily cross, and deny himself, he cannot be my disciple.* But how hard is it for such men to make conscience to keep or to act according to a good conscience, where worldly loss or damage, either in their profits or pleasures, presents. What screwing and windings do they make to form their consciences to look another way. What seeking out of arguments and carnal reasonings, to make themselves believe otherwise than they really do believe; nay, sometimes forcing themselves, for their interest, to profess that which they do not, nor cannot believe. And this is a

great abomination in the sight of God; and such are oftentimes shut up in darkness, and given over to a reprobate mind, because for worldly ends they choose the darkness rather than the light, and come to have their portions in it.

"The third thing is, where men give over their consciences to the regulation and government of others. These may be said to be men without the exercise of their conscience; for they have not the use of it, nor do stand in a capacity of accepting any illuminations by the working of God's Spirit; but are bound as slaves and vassals to him, to whom they have subjected themselves, and receive their precepts by the teaching of that man, though he be never so bad. And of this God complained of old, saying: Their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men. Then it seems they should have been taught of God. But, alas! what a condition are those souls in, and how uncertainly do they go on, that have given themselves over to another to govern their very thoughts, their faith, their living and works! If he errs, they must err too; if he falls into the ditch, they must fall in too;

nay, and this it not all, for he himself is not his own, nor the Lord's freeman; but he is bound under somebody else, as much as thou art under him, and he again under another, and so on. So that error, darkness, and blindness, spread over all; and all are wandered from that Spirit which Christ hath sent, according to his promise, to lead his people into Truth, whom, He said, the world could not receive; and now it is manifestly true, the world will make any shift rather than come to the teachings of his Spirit; yea, will pin their faith upon the sleeve of a priest or a monk, although they know them to be so far from infallibility, that they see their failings daily, in pride, covetousness, luxury, wantonness, and hypocrisy, and that these are such as are not able to preserve themselves out of the snares of Satan.

"Who would think any man of understanding could be so blinded, as to imagine that such can absolve them of their sin, who cannot keep out of it themselves; but are overcome by the temptations of Satan, and by their own lusts and concupiscence, and must have another to absolve them, and another again for him, and so forth.

"Ah! where is the pure light of Christ in the conscience all this while, that should guide and rule the conscience of the one and the other, to teach them how to keep their consciences void of offence towards God and man? O that men would hearken to this, and let it have its proper office in their consciences, unto which God hath appointed it. This would nourish and strengthen every good thing that hath been planted by good education; and bring that good which is held in notion to flourish in virtue. This would work out any evil thing that hath been sown by bad education; and make it die and wither. This would teach you to lay by all worldly interest, and dedicate yourselves to the Lord, henceforth to be taught and guided by Him: and Christ Jesus, by his Light and Spirit, would so open your understandings, that He would make you wiser than your teachers in the great mystery of regeneration, without which all worships, religions, confessions, absolutions, yea, alms and prayers, will stand a man in no stead: for *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

"Now, friends, you that are in sufferings, and are scattered to and fro in many nations,

upon the account you cannot for conscience sake conform to that religion which you believe to be idolatrous, what can be a more proper exercise for your minds, than to examine your own souls, to see what it is that hath been your leader and guide in this your refusing to conform? Whether it were your education, or any worldly interest or dependencies upon any, or whether it were some overmuch sway and prevalency that any man or men have had upon your consciences; or lastly, whether it hath been the light of the Word and Spirit of Christ shining in your hearts, and illuminating your understanding, to see the error and idolatry of the nations; and that, in tenderness of conscience towards God, and in obedience to his grace and Truth, you chose rather to forsake your native country, and your worldly enjoyments, than to defile your consciences, and sin against that light and grace, which the Father of Lights had bestowed upon you.

"Now those of you that find it thus with you, what a comfort will it be in all your adversities, when you feel the evidence of God's witness in your consciences, testifying your sufferings to be upon this account! And

who good will it be for you all to follow the leadings and guidings of it in all things, and see if there be not yet many things remaining in and among you, that are as contrary to that light and grace in your hearts, and as burdensome to your souls, and that keep you from reconciliation with God! And the more you exercise yourselves in trying and proving your words and actions by this light in your own souls, the more clearly you will see a necessity of reforming your ways in the sight of God, and for you not to rest satisfied that you have obeyed it in one thing, but to labour and travail in the daily cross, till all things that stand in opposition to the holy will of God be subdued in you; that so you may not lose the reward of what you have done. For it is not faithfulness in one particular will serve our turns, but, as Moses said when he prophesied of Christ, *It shall come to pass, that that soul which will not hear Him in* ALL *things shall be cut off.* Therefore the way to make peace with God, and reconciliation, is, to follow the Lord fully, as did Joshua, that is, to leave off and forsake every thing that is evil in yourselves, as well as the idolatry that is in others which they would have brought you to join with them in.

"In the next place, I would put you upon a serious consideration, what effect your present suffering condition hath wrought in you towards your sanctification; for it is the work and business of a true Christian soul to be bettered by every condition, and most of all by sufferings, which are permitted of God, for the slaying and crucifying all that in his people which is contrary unto Him; that they may be as gold purified in the furnace of tribulation. Now it will be of great profit to you to come to a search in yourselves how this work of mortification is carried on, and to enquire whether that vain and airy mind that too much prevailed upon you in your own country, which led you out to fashions and customs, be not yet alive in you; which puts you upon such great haste to fashion yourselves to the fashions of the nations where you are scattered, and of conforming to their ways and manners.

"O! my friends, if a true sense of your states did remain upon your spirits, how would it make you grave and weighty, and bring you into sobriety in words and actions! by which the nations where you live might see that it was from a sound principle of religion and

godliness, that you have denied the superstition of your own country, and not barely for a different form of religion, which makes men no better, one form than another; for you may remember that the Apostles and primitive Christians had not fellowship with those that held the same form with themselves, if they denied to be subject to the power of godliness. And indeed that is the life of religion, and the crown of all sufferings upon the account of religion, when the sufferers in the time of their sufferings feel in their souls the virtue and life of Him for whose Name they suffer, supporting them in their afflictions, and also preserving them from the pollutions and defilements of the world. Thus it was with the disciples of old, who in a time of persecution were scattered over Asia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. They carried along with them the sweet savour of life; and it is said, that *the Word of God grew*, or increased *mightily*; for, alas! what advantage hath a Protestant over a Papist, if both remain subject to the prince of the power of the air, who hath his rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience, of what sort or profession soever they are.

"Therefore let me persuade and beseech you, in the tender love of God, not too much to look upon that little reformation which you have; but look at, and consider how much is yet to be reformed, before you can come to be, as you know you ought to be, answerable to the holy, pure mind of the holy pure God, with whom, and in whose eternal pure presence, you desire to have your eternal portion and inheritance. And although this be not obtained by works, but through grace, yet all that are truly subjected to the grace of God, are led by it to *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, and soberly, and godly, in this present evil world. Tit.* ii. 11. So examine yourselves, and see how your lives and conversations answer the grace and light of Truth, which, through Christ Jesus the Fountain of Light and Truth, is communicated to you; and accordingly you may find a true judgment arise in your own souls, how it stands with every one of you in the sight of God.

"There is one thing more that lies upon me to put you in mind of, and that is, to move you to an humble thankful mind to the Lord, that He hath in this the time of your afflictions

opened the hearts of so many kings and princes to receive and succour you, and of so many people to relieve your necessities; which indeed is a great mercy. The consideration whereof may be a great motive upon your spirits to trust the Lord, and to serve Him in your places where you are cast, and to endeavour yourselves to answer his love and kindness towards you; that his mercies and goodness may oblige your hearts to love the Lord more than all; and this will more and more open the hearts of all that love the Lord, to minister to you in such things as you need, both temporal and spiritual.

"And truly, friends, I have with grief many a time beheld you as a people under great trials, and had wished your trials had wrought a better effect upon you than they have yet had. And there came a necessity upon my spirit to visit you with these few considerations, in the pure love of God, hoping they will meet with many among you that will receive this visitation in the same love in which it is sent unto you. And I pray God it may do you good, and have an effect upon your hearts, for your spiritual advantage. But if any among you should despise it, and cast good counsel be-

hind their backs, and cavil either at the matter or style, such will but hurt their own souls, and not me; neither shall I, that I know of, be concerned thereat, but with grief for their sakes, having faithfully discharged that which lay upon me to you-ward; and my reward is with the Lord; and his Spirit teacheth me to love all men, and to labour for the good of all men, as knowing it is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all men every where should repent, and come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved.

"STEPHEN CRISP.

"*Colchester, the* 17*th* 11*th Month*, 1688."

No. 37. "*An Epistle of Tender Love and Brotherly Advice to all the Churches of Christ, throughout the world, &c.* 1690.—23 *pages.*

This is the last Epistle of our excellent Author, which I find printed. It contains a review of the progress of the Society, the institution of the Discipline, and the means and spirit by which alone it can be advantageously conducted. It may be considered as a farewell address to the Churches, among which he had so long laboured; and, though he notices in it the decay of his bodily powers, it evinces the maturity of his intellectual and Christian character. He seems already upon the verge of that perfect day, which is the summit of the good man's hope and experience.

I present the Epistle uncurtailed to the reader.

"Dearly beloved friends and brethren, gathered out of the world by the Eternal Arm and Power of the mighty God, to bear his holy Name in your generation; my love and life, in the fellowship of the universal Spirit, salutes you all; and my prayer to God is, that you may be kept steadfast and unmovable in

the grace of God, and in the communion of his Holy Spirit; that ye may bring forth fruit in abundance, according to the abundant mercy and grace bestowed upon you, to the glory of God, and to your mutual joy, comfort, and edification.

"And that you may so do, let your eye be kept daily to the Lord; and behold, and take notice of the wondrous works that He hath wrought in you, and for you, since the day ye were first quickened by his immortal Word, and stirred up to seek after Him, and to wait upon Him; how good and gracious He hath been to you, in bringing you from the barren mountains, where your souls languished for the heavenly nourishment—where you knew not the Lord, nor one another, but were without a comforter, or any to sympathize with you in your mournings. O how hath He pitied your groanings, and had compassion on your sighings; and brought you into acquaintance with those that were in the like exercises! and then He taught you to believe on Him who was able to help you. And those that were thus taught of the Father, and felt his drawing cords of love prevailing upon them; these came to Christ their Saviour, and in Him began to

feel a unity one with another, in the faith you had received in Him; whereby you believed He would give you of his Spirit, to teach and guide you in the way of truth, righteousness, and peace.

"And thus was the foundation of your holy communion laid; and a lively hope raised in each particular soul, that He that had begun this blessed work would carry it on; and this hope made you that ye were not ashamed to make a public profession of his Name before the world, but cheerfully to take up his cross, and deny yourselves of your former pleasures, friendships, and delights of this world. This hope hath been your support in many sharp trials and bitter combats, which you have had with the enemy of your souls' peace within, and with the enemies of God's holy way and Truth without. And in all your conflicts, you have found Him nigh at hand, to put forth his power on your behalf, as you have depended upon Him for his assistance; and by these experiences of his goodness, your faith hath been strengthened. And by the same Word of Life that quickened you, many more have been reached unto, so that you have seen a daily addition of strength in the particular,

and also an addition to your number, to your great comfort and encouragement. And many have come to wait upon the Lord among you; and many are daily enquiring after the way to Sion, with their faces thitherward. These things are worth your remembrance, and serious considerations, that you may look upon these great mercies, as obligations upon your souls, to walk humbly before the Lord, and to be devout and fervent in your testimony for that God who hath thus done great things for you.

"And, friends, consider of the great works that this mighty arm of the Lord hath brought to pass in the general, as well as in the particular. How many contrivances have been framed, and laws and decrees made, to lay you waste, and to make you cease to be a people! and how have the wicked rejoiced thereat, for a season, crying, '*Ah, ha, thus would we have it! they are all now given up to banishments, to imprisonments, to spoils and ruins; now let us see if that invisible arm they trust in, can deliver them.*' O friends! how hath your God been your support in the midst of all these exercises! and when He hath pleased, how hath He quieted the sharpest storms, and

turned back the greatest floods and torrents of persecution that ever you met! and how hath He confounded his and your enemies, and brought confusion upon the heads of them that sought your hurt! Were not these things wrought by the power of God? Did your number, your policy, your interest, or any thing that might be called your own, contribute any thing to these your great preservations and deliverances? If not, then let God have the glory; and acknowledge to his praise, these have been the Lord's doings, and are marvellous in our eyes.

"Again, dear friends, consider how the wicked one hath wrought in a mystery among yourselves, to scatter you, and to lay you waste from being a people, as at this day! How many several ways hath he tried, raising up men of perverse minds, to subvert, and to turn you from the faith, and from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus our Lord—and to separate you from that invisible Power that hath been your strength—and to separate you one from another; and, by subtle wiles, to lead you into a false liberty above the cross of Christ; and sometimes, by sowing seeds of heresy and seditions, endeavouring to corrupt

the minds of whom they could, with pernicious principles. But O! how have their designs been frustrated, and the authors thereof confounded and brought to nought! and how have you been preserved, as a flock under the hand of a careful shepherd, even unto this day; which ministers great cause of thanksgiving unto all the faithful, who have witnessed the working of this preserving power in their own paticular.

"Also, my friends, it is worth your considerations, to behold how that, by this invisible Power, so many faithful watchmen are raised up upon the walls of your Sion, that in most of your Meetings, there are men and women upon whom God hath laid a concern, to be taking care for the good of the whole, and to take the oversight upon them, to see all things kept in good and decent order, and to make due provision for the comforting and relieving the necessities of the needy and distressed, that nothing be lacking to make your way comfortable. And these have not been, nor are brought under this charge by any act of yours; but God hath raised up Pastors and Teachers, Elders and Deacons, of his own election and choice, and bowed their spirits

to take upon them the work and service to which they are appointed for the Lord's sake, and for the body's sake, which is the Church; to whom it may truly be said, as in the 20th chapter of *Acts*, ver. 28. *Take ye heed to the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, &c.* And such ought to be hearkened to in the discharge of their trust, as those that must give an account to Him that called them, and gifted them for their several works and services in the Church.

" And by these ways and means hath the Lord established among you a heavenly government, and built as it were a hedge about you, that ye may be preserved from generation to generation, a people fitted for the glory that is and shall daily more and more be revealed among and upon the faithful, who delight in that power that called them to be saints, and to bear a profession for the holy Name of God, against the many names and ways that men, in their changeable minds, have set up; that the Name of the Lord alone may be exalted.

" And, dear friends and brethren, I entreat you, that the considerations of these great and

weighty things which God hath wrought for you, and among you, may have that deep and weighty influence upon your souls, that ye may find yourselves engaged to answer the love and mercy of God in your lives and conversations, and in all you have to do in this world; that ye may shew forth the honour of God in all things—that the light which hath shined in you, may shine forth through you unto others, who yet sit in darkness—that all men may know by your innocent and harmless conversations, and by your close keeping to the Lord, that ye are a people who are assisted and helped by a supernatural Power, which governs your wills, and subjects them to his blessed will; and that guides and orders your affections, and sets them upon heavenly and Divine objects; and gives you power to deny your own private interests, where they happen to stand in competition with the interest of Truth. For these, and these only, will be found the true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, who can deny themselves, take up a cross daily, and follow Him in the guidance of his regenerating Power, which brings death upon self, and crucifies the old nature, with its affections and lusts, and raiseth up a birth in you, that hath a holy will and desire to

serve the Lord, and do his will on the earth. And such as these are instruments in the hand of God for Him to work by, and to do works of righteousness, of justice, of charity, and all the other virtues belonging to a Christian life, to the honour of God, and for the comfort and benefit of his church and people.

"And all you, dear friends, upon whom the Lord hath laid a care for his honour, and for the prosperity of the truth, and gathered you into the good order of the Gospel, to meet together to manage the affairs thereof; take heed that you have a single eye to the Lord, to do the Lord's business in the leadings of his Spirit, which is but one, and brings all that are given up to be governed by it, to be of one mind and heart, at least, in the general purport and service of those meetings; although, through the diversity of exercises, and the several degrees of growth among the brethren, every one may not see or understand alike in every matter at the first propounding of it. Yet this makes no breach of the unity, nor hinders the brotherly kindness, but puts you often upon an exercise, and an inward travailing, to feel the pure, peaceable wisdom that is from above, to open among you; and every

one's ear is open to it, in whomsoever it speaks; and thereby a sense of life is given in the meeting, to which all that are of a simple and tender mind, join and agree.

"But if any among you should be contrary minded in the management of some outward affair relating to the truth, this doth not presently break the unity that ye have in Christ, nor should weaken the brotherly love, so long as he keeps waiting for an understanding from God, to be gathered into the same sense with you, and walk with you according to the law of charity. Such an one ought to be borne with, and cherished, and the supplications of your souls will go up to God for him, that God may reveal it to him, if it be his will; that so no difference may be in understanding, so far as is necessary for the good of the church, no more than there is in matters of faith and obedience to God.

"For, my friends, it is not of absolute necessity that every member of the church should have the same measure of understanding in all things; for then where were the duty of the strong bearing with the weak? then, where were the brother of low degree? where

would be any submitting to them that are set over others in the Lord? which all tend to the preserving of unity in the church, notwithstanding the different measures, and different growths of the members thereof. For as the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, so are the spirits of all that are kept in a true subjection to the Spirit of life in themselves, kept in the same subjection to the sense of life given by the same Spirit in the church: and by this means we come to know the one Master, even Christ, and have no room for other masters, in the matter of our obedience to God.

"And while every one keeps in this true subjection, the sweet concord is known, and the oil is not only upon Aaron's head, but it reacheth the skirts of his garment also; and things are kept sweet and savoury, and ye love one another, from the greatest to the least, in sincerity, and, as the apostle saith, without dissimulation; and this love excludes all whisperings of evil things, all back-biting, tale-bearing, grudgings, and murmurings; and keeps friends' minds clean one toward another, waiting for every opportunity to do each other good, and to preserve each other's repu-

tation; and their hearts are comforted at the sight of one another. And in all their affairs, both relating to the church and to the world, they will be watchful over their own spirits, and keep in the Lord's power, over that nature and ground in themselves, that would be apt to take an offence, or construe any word or action to a worse sense than the simplicity thereof, or the intention of the other concerned, will allow of.

"And whereas it may often fall out, that among a great many, some may have a different apprehension of a matter from the rest of their brethren, especially in outward or temporal things, there ought to be a Christian liberty maintained for such to express their sense with freedom of mind, or else they will go away burthened; whereas, if they speak their minds freely, and a friendly and Christian conference be admitted thereupon, they may be eased, and oftentimes the different apprehension of such an one comes to be wholly removed, and his understanding opened, to see as the rest see. For the danger in society, doth not lie so much in that some few may have a differing apprehension in some things from the general sense; as it doth in this,

namely, when such as differ, do suffer themselves to be led out of the bond of charity, and labour to impose their private sense upon the rest of their brethren, and to be offended and angry if it be not received. This is the seed of sedition and strife, that hath grown up in too, too many, to their own hurt.

"And therefore, my dear friends, beware of it, and seek not to drive a matter on in fierceness or in anger, nor to take offence into your minds at any time, because what seems to be clear to you, is not presently received; but let all things in the church be propounded with an awful reverence of Him that is the Head and Life of it; who hath said, *Where two or three are met in my Name, I will be in the midst of them.* And so He is, and may be felt by all who keep in his Spirit. But he that follows his own spirit, sees nothing as he ought to see it. Therefore let all beware of their own spirits and natural tempers, as they are sometimes called; but let all keep in a gracious temper. Then are ye fit for the service of the house of God, whose house ye are, as ye keep upon the foundation that God hath laid; and He will build you up, and teach you how to build up one another in Him. And as

every member must feel life in themselves, and all from one Head, this life will not hurt itself in any, but be tender of the life in all; for by this one life of the Word, ye were begotten, and by it ye are nourished and made to grow into your several services in the Church of God.

"It is no man's learning, nor artificial acquirements; it is no man's riches, nor greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence and natural wisdom, that makes him fit for government in the Church of Christ, unless he, with all his endowments, be seasoned with the heavenly salt, and his spirit be subjected, and his gifts pass through the fire of God's altar, a sacrifice to his praise and honour; that so self may be crucified and baptized in death, and the gifts made use of in the power of the resurrection of the Life of Jesus in him. And when this great work is wrought in a man, then all his gifts and qualifications are sanctified; then they are made use of for the good of the body, which is the Church; and they are as ornaments and jewels, which serve for the joy and comfort of all who are partakers of the same Divine fellowship of life, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And thus come many

to be fitted and furnished to good works, which are brought forth in their due seasons, for edification, and building up the weak, and for repairing the decayed places, and also for defence of them that are feeble, that hurtful things may not come near them.

"O friends! great is the work the Lord hath called you to, and is fitting you for, who innocently wait upon Him. And the Lord hath opened my heart unto you; and laid it upon me, to exhort and beseech you to have a care ye quit yourselves as ye ought, in what God requires of you. And for the more particular expressing what lies before me in the matter, I shall set down a few particular observations, for your benefit and advantage. And my soul's desire is, that my labour of love may have a good effect in all your bosoms, that God may be honoured thereby. And, friends, ye know the chief business to which ye are all called in your particular men and women's meetings, is under these two heads, Justice and Charity; the first, to see that every one hath right done him, and the other to take care there be nothing lacking to the comfort of the poor, that are made partakers of the same faith with you.

"And when ye meet about these things, keep the Lord in your eye, and wait to feel his power to guide and direct you, to speak and behave yourselves in the church of God, as becomes the peaceable Gospel. And beware of all brittleness of spirit, and sharp reflection upon each other's words; for that will kindle up heats, and create a false fire. And when one takes a liberty of a sharp word spoken out of the true fear and tenderness, it oftentimes becomes a temptation to another; and if he hath not a great care, it will draw him out also, and then the first is guilty of two evils; first, being led into a temptation, and then, secondly, he becomes a temptation to others.

"Therefore all had need to be upon their watch, neither to tempt nor to be tempted; and let none think it a sufficient excuse for them that they were provoked, for we are as answerable to God for evil words spoken upon provocation, as without provocation; for, for that end hath the Lord revealed his power to us, to keep and preserve us in his fear and counsel in the time of our provocations. And therefore, if any man, through want of watchfulness, should be overtaken with heat or passion, *a soft answer appeaseth*

wrath, saith the wise man; and therefore such a time is fittest for a soft answer, lest the enemy prevail on any to their hurt, and to the grief and trouble of their brethren; for it is the proper duty of watchmen and overseers, to spare the flock, that is, let nothing come nigh them that will hurt them, and wound and grieve them. Nay, the good apostle was so careful over the flock of believers, that if there were any doubtful matters to be disputed of, he would not have them that were weak in the faith at such disputes, much less ought them that are weak to see those that are strong descend from their strength, and go into the weakness where they are not able to bear; for that is certainly the weak that cannot bear. Those that really live in the strength and power, they can bear even burdens for them that cannot bear their own.

"The apostle, in the place before mentioned, when he sent for the elders of Ephesus to Miletus, and left a charge with them, before he said, *Take heed to the flock of God*, he said, *Take ye heed to yourselves*. And indeed we are none of us like to discharge ourselves well towards others, but by taking heed to ourselves, to be kept in that sober, innocent frame of spirit, which the Truth calls for.

"In the next place, my dear friends, when ye are called upon in point of justice, to give a sentence of right between friend and friend; take heed that neither party get possession of your spirit aforehand, by any way or means whatsoever, or obtain any word or sentence from you in the absence of the other party, he not being yet heard. There is nothing more comely among men, than impartial judgment. Judgment is a seat where neither interest nor affection, nor former kindnesses, may come. We may make no difference of the worthiness or unworthiness of persons in judgment, as we may in charity; but in judgment, if a good man, being mistaken, hath a bad case, or a bad man a good case, according to his case must he have sentence.

"It was a good saying: *He that judgeth among men, judgeth for the Lord, and He will repay it.* Therefore let all be done as unto the Lord, and as ye are willing to answer it in his presence; and although some may for a time be discontent thereat, yet in time God shall clear up your innocency as the sun at noon-day; and they that kick at sound judgment, will find but hard work of it, they do but kick against that which will prick them; and however such, through their

wilfulness, and their abounding in their own sense, may hurt themselves, yet you will be preserved, and enjoy your peace and satisfaction in the discharge of your consciences in the sight of God.

"And as concerning practical charity, ye know it is supported by liberality; and where liberality ceaseth, charity waxeth cold, yea, so far ceaseth. Where there is no contribution, there is no distribution; where the one is sparing, the other is sparing; and therefore let every one nourish charity in the root, that is, keep a liberal mind, a heart that looks upon the substance that is given him, as really bestowed upon him for the support of charity, as for the support of his own body. And where people are of this mind, they will have a care of keeping back any of God's part; for He hath in all ages, in a most singular manner, espoused the case of the poor, the widow, and fatherless; and hath often signified by his prophets and ministers, a special charge upon rich men that had this world's goods, that they should look to it that they were faithful stewards of what they possessed, and that they might be found in good works, and might not suffer their hearts so to cleave to uncertain riches, as to neglect the service God had given

them the things of this life for; either to give them up when called for, in a testimony for his worthy Name, or to communicate of them to those that were in necessity.

"Now as concerning the necessities of the poor, there is great need of wisdom when ye meet together about that affair; for, as I said before, though the worthiness or unworthiness of persons is not to be considered in judgment, yet in this it is. And you will find some that God hath made poor; and some that have made themselves poor; and some that others have made poor; which must all have their several considerations, in which you ought to labour to be unanimous, and not one to be taken up with an affection to one person more than another, but every one to love every one in the *universal* Spirit, and then to deal out that love in the outward manifestations thereof, according to the measure that the Lord in his wisdom working in you, shall measure forth to them.

"And as to those who, by sickness, lameness, age, or other impotency, are brought into poverty by the hand of Providence, these are your peculiar care and objects pointed out to you, to bestow your charity upon; for by

them the Lord calls for it; for as the earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it, He hath by his sovereign power commanded in every Dispensation, that a part of what we enjoy from Him, should be thus employed. The Israelites were not to reap the corners of their fields, nor to gather the gleanings of the corn or vintage, it was for the poor. And in the time of the Gospel, they were to lay apart on the first day of the week, a part of what God had blessed them with, for the relief of those that were in necessity; nay, they did not confine themselves in their charity to their own Meetings, but had an universal eye through the whole church of Christ; and, upon extraordinary occasions, sent their benevolence to relieve the Saints at Jerusalem in a time of need.

"And all that keep in the guidance of the same universal Spirit, will make it their business to be found in the same practice of charity and good works. To do good, and to communicate, *forget not*, saith the apostle. So they that forget not this Christian duty, will find out the poor's part in the corners and gleanings of the profits of their trades and merchandizes, as well as the old Israelite did in the corners and gleanings of his field; and in

the distribution of it, will have regard to comfort the bowels of those who are, by the Divine providence of God, put out of a capacity of enjoying those outward comforts of health, and strength, and plenty, which others do enjoy. For, while they are partakers of the same faith, and walk in the way of righteousness with you, submitting themselves patiently to the dispensations of God's providence towards them, they are of your household, and under your care, both to visit and to relieve, as members of one body, of which Christ Jesus is Head; and he that giveth to such poor, lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay it.

"But there is another sort of poor, who make themselves poor through their sloth and carelessnes, and sometimes by their wilfulness; being heady and high-minded, and taking things in hand that are more than they can manage, and make a flourish for a season, and then, through their own neglects, are plunged down into great poverty. These are a sort the primitive churches began to be troubled withal in the early days of the Gospel; for the apostle took notice of some that would not work at all, and sharply reproved them, and said, *They that would not work, should not*

eat. And these are commonly a sort of busy-bodies, and meddlers with others' matters, while they neglect their own, and run into a worse way than the unbelievers; while they profess to be believers, yet do not take a due care for those of their own household.

"The charity that is proper to such, is to give them admonition and reproof, and to convince them of their sloth and negligence; and if they submit to your reproof, and are willing to amend, then care ought to be taken to help them into a way and means to support themselves. And sometimes, by a little help in this kind, some have been reclaimed from the snares of their souls' enemy. But if they will not receive your wholesome counsel and admonitions, but kick against it, either in their words or actions, friends will be clear of such in the sight of God; for it is unreasonable in them to expect you should feed them that will not be advised by you, because they break the obligation of Society, by their disorderly walking; for our communion doth not stand only in frequenting Meetings, and hearing Truth preached; but in answering the blessed principle of Truth, in life and conversation,

and therein both the rich and the poor have fellowship one with another.

"There is another sort that are made poor by the oppressions and cruelties of others. These oppressed poor, cry aloud in the ears of the Almighty; and He will in his own time avenge their cause. But, in the mean time, there is a tenderness to be extended to them, not knowing how soon it may be our turn; and if there be need of counsel and advice, or if any applications can be made to any that are able to deliver them from the oppressors; in such cases, let all that are capable, be ready and willing to advise, relieve, and help the distressed. And this is an acceptable work of charity; and a great comfort to such in sharp afflictions; and their souls will bless the instruments of their ease and comfort.

"And, my dear friends, as God hath honoured you with so high and holy a calling, to be his servants and workmen in this his great and notable day, and to work together in his power, in setting forth his praise and glory in the earth, and gathering together in one the scattered Seed in this and other nations; O! let the dignity of your calling, provoke and

encourage you to be diligent attenders upon his work and service you are called to; and let not your concern in the world, draw you from observing the times and seasons appointed to meet together. But you that are elder, set a good example to the younger sort, by a due observation of the hour appointed, that they that come first one time, may not by their long staying for others be discouraged, so as perhaps they may be last another time. But when the time is come, leave your business for the Lord's work; and He will take care your business shall not suffer, but will add a blessing upon it, which will do more for you, than the time can do that may be saved out of his service.

"And when ye have to do with perverse, and froward, or disorderly persons, whom ye have occasion to reprove and to rebuke for the Truth's sake, and you find them stout, and high, and reflecting upon you, then is a time for the Lamb's meekness to shine forth, and for you to feel your authority in the Name of Christ to deal with such an one, and to wait for the pure and peaceable wisdom from above, to bring down and confound the earthly wisdom. And in this frame of mind you labour

together, to pull the entangled sheep out of the thicket, and to restore that which is gone astray, to the fold again, if you can; but if you cannot, yet ye save yourselves from the guilt of his blood; and if such do perish, his blood will be on his own head. But, on the other hand, if ye suffer their perverse spirits to enter, and their provocations to have a place in you, so as to kindle your spirits into a heat and passion, then you get a hurt, and are incapable to do them any good; but words will break out that will need repentance, and the wicked will be stiffened and strengthened thereby, and you miss the service that you did really intend.

"Therefore, dearly beloved, keep upon your watch; keep on your spiritual armour; keep your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and the God of peace be with you, and crown your endeavours with good success, to your joy and comfort; and will bring up his power over your adversaries and opposers more and more, to which many shall bow and bend in your sight; and will bring shame and confusion upon the rebellious, who harden their hearts and stiffen their necks against the Lord, and his Christ, and king-

dom; which He will exalt in the earth, notwithstanding all that Satan and all his evil instruments can do to hinder the growth and progress of his blessed Truth; for of the increase of the government and of the peace of the kingdom of Christ, there shall be no end.

"And, now friends, having cleared my conscience of what lay upon me for some time, to write unto you by way of remembrance, and as the exhortation of my life unto you, I remain travailing in spirit for the welfare of Zion. And although the outward man decays; yet in the inward man I am comforted in beholding daily the great things that our God hath done, and is still doing, for them that have their sole dependence upon Him. So I commit you to the grace of God, for your director and preserver in these and all your several services unto which God hath called you; that, by the operations of his mighty power, ye may be kept blameless and unspotted of the world, to his honour, and your comfort, and to the universal comfort and edification of the Church; that so praises and thanksgiving may fill your hearts and mouths, your families and your meetings; for He is worthy, who is our Tower, our Support, the

Lord of Hosts, the King of Saints, to whom be glory, honour, and renown, through this and all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

"*From your friend and brother in the communion and fellowship, in the Gospel of peace and purity,*

"STEPHEN CRISP."

London, the 15*th of the* 7*th Month,* 1690.

Besides the printed Works of Stephen Crisp now enumerated, and which have been given in the order in which they are arranged in the volume of his Works published soon after his decease, there is a very lively Memoir of James Parnel, prefixed to the works of that extraordinary young man, and of which my Father availed himself, and made extracts from it, in his Biographical Notice of James Parnel.

Stephen Crisp was also the Author of a little work somewhat in the style of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, entitled, "A Short History of a Long Travel from Babylon to Bethel;" the original of which, in his own hand writing, is still extant in the collection of Colchester Meeting. And it appears from the Testimony of the Yearly Meeting of Amsterdam, respecting S. Crisp, that he published two letters relative to the persecution in East Friesland, which are not collected in his Works.

J. Whiting notices these two Letters, under the title of, "*The Outcry against the Persecution in Frizeland, in two parts.*" He also mentions "*A new Book for Children to learn in, or Little Primer*, 24mo." written by "*Stephen Crisp and others.*"

The following Sermon is stated to have been Preached by Stephen Crisp, at Devonshire House Meeting-House, on the 27th of 3rd Month, 1688. *(O. S.) See Introduction, p.* xxxvi.

THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

WHEN God gave forth his *law* on *Mount Sinai,* which *Israel* was to hear and to obey, the first and great commandment was: *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.* Here is the sum and substance of all true *religion* that ever was upon the earth to this day; all the commandments, all the precepts, prophecies, and all the dealings of God with his people from that day to this, have been all contained in this short precept: *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

And as long as *Israel* stood in obedience to this command, their blessings were multiplied upon them, their good things were increased from day to day. The Lord was with them as long as they were willing to be his people. He appeared as their God, and as their Defender; wrought their deliverances, *fought*

all their battles for them, gave them dominion and strength, courage and wisdom; ministered out of his *treasury* all good things unto them; for the great care of God Almighty was with all his people. He had regard to them, and visited them at all times, to keep them from idolatry: *I am*, saith He, *a jealous God;* take notice of Me to be so; I am jealous of my Name; if thou wilt be mine, *Thou shalt have no gods but Me.*

And all the precepts about offerings and sacrifices, and making atonement for sinners, and the divers services and worship, the various offices in the temple and *sanctuary*, they were all outward means appointed of God, to keep this outward church in an inward conformity to the command of God. This command was written on tables of stone, and these tables were laid up in the *Ark of God*, and all this pertained to the *First Covenant*, and typed and figured out the Dispensation of the *New and Everlasting Covenant*, that God would make with his people, not like unto the old: How not like it? Not like it in the outward shadows, the types and shadows of things; but He would bring forth the substance of all those *shadows* and *types*, and would

alter the form and outward appearance of things: *For, as God is unchangeable,* so is his law unchangeable.

Moses saith, the first and great commandment is: *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.* This was put into the stone tables. Christ Jesus saith: *The first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* (*Matt.* xxii. 27.) This is put into the *tables of the heart.* So here is a difference between the first commandment by Moses, and the first commandment by Christ; they both acknowledge the first and great command to be the subjecting of the creature to Him that made him, as his God, that he may serve only the Creator, and may love Him with his whole heart. The Jew could prove this by his *stone tables,* and Christ proves this by the fleshly tables of the heart; for there the creature is bound to love the Lord with his whole heart, and to serve Him only: *Him only shalt thou serve.*

Now here the Jews' law is brought over to the Christians', in the greatest point of religion that ever was preached; shuts out all idolatry,

all superstition, all variety of religions, all is shut out by this commandment; and the Christian that hath the law written in his heart, according to the New Covenant, he can go as readily to it and read it, as ever the Jew could go to his *stone table*, and read the law there; you cannot deny that if there be a thing written and engraven in my heart, I can go as readily to it as I can go to any book or table, though I have the keeping of it: but the Jews had not the keeping of the law; for generally it was laid up in the *Ark of God*.

Now friends, that which lies upon my mind to speak to you at this time, and that out of the great love that I have to all your precious and immortal souls, as God hath had love to mine, is, that you would all consider and weigh in the fear of the Lord, whose presence is among us, which of you, and how many of you, are come to the obedience of this commandment! I do not doubt that the most of you can say *all the Commandments*; but a happy people are you if you can do *one*. I dare pronounce that soul, a blessed soul, that can perform this one commandment, that can or dare stand before his Maker and say: *O Lord! I love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul,*

and with all my might; my love is withdrawn from all other things in comparison of Thee; there is nothing in this whole world hath a place in my mind, but it is in subjection to the love of Thee.

Here is the first and great commandment, the unchangeable law, the law that was good in Moses's days, and good in Christ's days, and it holds good in our days; and indeed it is such a definitive law, that the breakers of it can neither be good Jews, nor good Christians. There is an absolute necessity lies upon us, of abstracting and drawing away our minds and souls from all other gods, from all images, and other dependencies and trusts, that people are naturally liable to trust to; and to have their whole confidence set upon the Lord: but alas! with grief of heart I speak it, there are but very few that as yet have known the right giving forth of the law; and there are fewer that are subject unto it. This law was not given forth at first without thunder and lightning, and a terrible noise, and the mountain smoking, (he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear,) insomuch as Moses himself said, he *feared greatly, and he quaked exceedingly*, because of the thunder of the Almighty,

and of the mountain that smoked and burned with fire, so that Israel could not draw nigh.

Now I say, there are but a few that have come to the knowledge of the giving forth of this law, that have certainly known those thunders, and that terrible work that the Lord of the whole earth makes, when he comes to set up his law; for a great many that have come nigh to it, and might have heard and received the words of the law of God, they have gone backward; they have done like unto the Jews of old; though they had suffered much, and gone through much, and had seen the wonders of the Lord, how he had led them and delivered them, yet when it came to this, that they must hear the voice of God, they said: We cannot bear it; we cannot endure it; we have devised for ourselves an easier way: for the voice of thunder and dreadful noises put them into terror, and quaking; and trembling, and great dread came upon them. But we have found an easier way, say they. What is that easier way? *Go thou*, said they to Moses, *and hear thou what the Lord saith, and come thou and tell us; thou shalt be a mediator between us; let God speak unto thee, and do thou speak the same to us, and we will hear thee.*

Thus the Jews that were not come beyond the law of God written on *tables of stone*, they would not come to receive it in their hearts, as the *Christian* must; so *Moses* received the *law* from the *mouth of God;* and he was faithful as a servant in the house of God; and he ministered forth the law of God, his precepts, statutes and judgments, and testimonies; and he made the Jews a book of laws for all of them to walk by, from the highest to the lowest; showing how they should act in criminal matters, and do justice between man and man; and what they should do in the worship of God; and what they should do towards the priest, whose lips should preserve knowledge for them; and so he brought up a form of religion, but his work was according to the precepts of God; and he brought them into the form of national religion, and government, and national laws. And so *Moses* and the priests ruled over them, and the priest offered sacrifice for them, and made atonement for them; and *Moses* enquired of the Lord, and asked counsel for them, and taught and instructed them; and what became of all this at last? When this was done, the priest made atonement for sin, but he could not pluck away the guilt of one sin: *There remained the*

conscience of sin, after he had made his offering. And *Moses* taught them the counsels of God, and the commands of God, but he could not bind their hearts to the obedience of them; for he declared openly against them, that they were *a rebellious and stiff-necked people*, notwithstanding they had a law without them.

Indeed time would fail me to run through the manifold miscarriages of the church of the *Jews*, in respect of their idolatry, in respect of their contempt and rebellion, both to God and his servant *Moses*, who was to teach and to guide them: I say, the time would fail me to mention the manifold miscarriages that happened among this people, who had a law and religion without them, and a teacher without them.

Now, in the fulness of time, it pleased God, in sending his Son Christ Jesus, to raise up a Prophet like unto *Moses*, in respect of faithfulness, though higher in respect of dignity; for *Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, but this man* was faithful *as a Son in his own house;* in the house that He was heir to: that house wherein He was a King, a Priest, a Prophet, and a Ruler. When the Lord sig-

nified, by the spirit of prophecy, the coming of the *Just One*, he signified to the people that his ministry should not be as that of *Aaron;* the people should not have their religion without them, and their laws and precepts without them, and their priests without them, and their worship and church without them; but that they should have it all within them: *I will write my law in their hearts, I will put it into their inward parts; then they shall be my people, and I will be their God, and they shall not forsake me.*

Your fathers broke my old covenant, but I will make a new covenant in the latter days; a new covenant, not like that your fathers broke: they brake the law without them; *but I will write my law in their hearts. This Prophet who is like to* Moses, *He shall teach my people, He shall be a leader to them, and guide them in the way they are to go, and shall be a Captain for them, to lead them to salvation; and it shall come to pass, in the day that I do this, if there be any that will not hear Him, he shall be cut off from among the people.* That is the judgment which comes upon the contemners of the Gospel, upon them that will not hear Christ Jesus; they shall be cut off from

the people. From what people? from the people of God; they shall have no part of the privileges that are enjoyed through Christ; they shall be cut off from the benefits that others reap by their faith in Christ.

So that now we are to expect the operation and working of a ministry, that leads people to an inward religion, a heart-religion; where the heart is fixed entirely upon the true and living God, as the object of their dependance and trust, and they have no other. This is a strange word to flesh and blood. What! no other dependance but on the invisible God? Flesh and blood, and sensuality, can never come to this: this is a religion that *hath been hid from ages and generations*, and will be hid from all ages that ever shall be in the world, where sensuality prevails. What! will you have me to place my whole dependance for the comfort of my life here, and of the life that is to come, the other life—to have my dependance upon an Invisible God—that Invisible Power that made me, and created the world? How is it possible for me to sequester myself, and draw myself off from all visible objects? I must trust to this, and trust to that. Flesh and blood can never attain to this, with all the wit

and reason it hath; it can never separate itself from idols: they are little children, they are children of another birth, born of another seed, that keep themselves from idols.

Friends, idolatry is a great deal more common, I find, than most are aware of. Am I commanded to *love the Lord with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and might?* What is left when the whole is taken away? If God hath my whole heart, what have I to bestow upon the world? What love, what affection, what eagerness, what fervency can I bestow upon the world, or any object in the world, when my whole heart, and soul, and mind, is gone before, is gone toward the Lord?

This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, that is: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Here it is that the law and the prophets, faith, creeds, prayer, religion, and worship, all that ever was in the world, all are comprehended in this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.* So what need is there for us to be disputing about religion, about this tenet, and the other tenet; this text, and the other

text? For my part, I should only desire for you to understand this text, and I should not doubt your going to heaven. Here is the sum, here is all at once, here is the quintessence of all religion, of all types, shadows, figures, ceremonies, and priesthood, and all that ever was or could be named and practised in the world; all is brought to this: *The heart given up to God*—our love set upon Him.

What! is this sufficient? will some say; this will make you a good moral man; but what is this to the Christian religion? You may be led into error, and become a heretic for all this.

How can this be, that I should not be of a sound faith, but led into error and heresy for all this? When people let in error, and heresy, and unsoundness of faith, where do they let it in? Do they not let in the principles of error and heresy into their hearts? I believe this, and that, and the other error; it comes into the heart, and hath a seat in the heart. But how can we let it into the heart, *when the heart is given up to God?* Cannot I keep out error and heresy, if I give up my heart and soul to Him? Cannot I trust Him with all?

This kind of talk of error and heresy, hath come among men that have had the keeping of their own souls; they have taken their own souls into their own hands, and have ordered their religion themselves, or have employed somebody to order it for them; and a great many of them have met together to make creeds, and catechisms, and confessions, and orthodox doctrines, that might certainly be professed and subscribed to. So afterwards some have come and found fault with them; and then they must have a Council to try them; then these go off and are laid aside, and others are given in the room of them; so that these men have set up for themselves. These would not be under the government and prescription of God, as children under the government of a father, but they will set up religions themselves, and say to the rest of the world: If you own any thing contrary to our principles, you are a heretic, and being a heretic you are to be rooted out and cut off. Do not you read in the Scripture, that *whoever hears not the Prophet that was to come into the world shall be cut off?* What! will not you hear Christ speak in the church? Will not you hear Christ speak? The church cannot speak with-

out a head; if you will not hear the Church, you shall be cut off.

All their barbarous and inhuman cruelties, martyring and dungeoning people, come from their making faiths themselves; and of all things nothing is more desperately wicked, and they did not know it. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* Men know not how proud and arrogant they themselves are, and yet they would be ordering the hearts, and minds, and consciences of others; and out of this hath sprung all superstition and idolatry, because men would not give up their hearts to God: *Thou shalt have no other gods but Me.* This commandment is great in itself, strict in the terms: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.* Their neighbours could not see with their eyes; therefore they would be destroying one another.

But, blessed be God, who is now bringing forth true Christianity, upon its old basis and foundation, whereon it was placed at first; for Christianity hath been jostled off from its first foundation; for, instead of loving God with

all their hearts, and loving their neighbours as themselves, they hated them: now this is the day, O friends! the weight of it is great, this, I say, is the day wherein God is bringing Christianity upon its old foundation.

I would not have you think that I am here judging our forefathers, that are fallen asleep, that therefore they are gone to perdition, because they saw not this day, and lived not to see that benefit of it which we enjoy. I am far from it. This was the thing that they believed and prayed to God for; they did not see this day outwardly, but they saw it by faith. When I was a child, I remember the people of God, when they met three or four together, they would rejoice in the hopes of what they foresaw; they gave thanks to God for the blessed days that He would bring forth, though they could not tell when. They did say and believe, that God would scatter the fogs and mists, and bring forth a happy day, wherein his people should have the gift of his Spirit; when they saw the impositions and persecutions of those times, when they that did not conform and comply, were cast into prisons, dungeons, and gaols: Well, it will not always be thus, said they; there is a day coming where-

in the Lord will set his people free from all the yokes of oppression, and from the oppressor.

Indeed my soul did rejoice in hearing the prophetical sayings of those good men; and I thought I might live to see that day. Blessed be God, that hath preserved my life to this day, and to this hour, to enjoy what they prayed for! They prayed to God to scatter the mists and fogs, that they might no longer cloud and darken men's minds, and hinder them from enjoying God's teaching. Blessed be God! that we are now in the enjoyment of the prayers of the faithful, that left the world before we were in it. Now the day is come that they prayed for, and enquired after.

How strangely doth the man talk, will some say, concerning the Christian religion! The Christian religion is all *England over;* go to any meeting in *London*, except one, and they will tell you they are Christians. I would to God they were; that is the worst I wish for them all. But why should we talk of the Christian religion, without the Christian life? Except we find that amongst them, what signifies the name and profession of it? And the Christian doctrine is wanting in many places

too. There are many in this city urging this very command, of loving God with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselves, as fervently as I can do, or any body else; and yet they will tell you, in the next breath, that no man in *London*, or in the world, can do this; no man can possibly love God with all his heart; never a man can be found that can perform such an act, as to love his neighbour as himself. Not *every* neighbour, but some *one* choice associate he may pick out, that he can love, and bear with his infirmities and affronts, and *love* him as himself. *Love* thy neighbour, that is, every body, that there may be a good-will for all people throughout the whole race of mankind: *Peace on earth, good-will towards men:* this is the fruit of the Gospel. Christian words will not make the Christian religion, there must be a Christian life; but where shall we find that, or seek it?

I know not, I have nothing to do to judge any body, but there is One that judgeth who it is that liveth the Christian life, and who doth not? Who is this? I answer, *The* Head *of the Christian Church.* Why, is He here? Yes, the Head of the Christian Church

is here, and He speaks and gives sentence; if you have an ear you may hear Him, if you will turn your mind inward, for He is an *inward minister;* every one of you, if you will turn your minds inward, He will tell you whether you live a Christian life, and what kind of a *life* it is you *live:* if there be a drunkard here, let him ask whether his life be a Christian life; will a man go away ignorant from this place, and have no answer? If there be a drunkard here, let him ask inwardly in his own bosom: Lord! is my life a *Christian life?* I dare affirm on God's behalf he will have an answer: No! my life is not a *Christian life*, but a shameful, beastly life, a brutish one.

Who told you that the *Head* of Christians, Christ Jesus, is present?—Christ Jesus, is He present?—How came He here? He ascended up into heaven such a day, say they, how came He here? Let Him be ascended up into heaven, yet He is not so ascended into heaven as not to be here also. How should He fulfil his promise, if He be circumscribed in heaven or earth? How should He make good his promise, if, when *two or three are met together in his Name, He is not in the midst of them?* Here are now many more than two or three

met together in the Name of Christ, and that hope for acceptance with God, through the *Mediator*, Christ Jesus: if you think that *there* are two or three met together in this place in the name of Christ, it follows that Christ is in the midst of them.

I know not what *you* may enjoy, some may possibly say, *I* do not find any such presence of Christ: I hear of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and I have heard talk of the presence of Christ at a meeting; but I have been at many a meeting, and I never found such a presence of Christ.

Can you read the Scriptures? Yes, I can read the Scriptures as well as you, but that cannot give me a sense of it; I do read the Scriptures and believe it; but what signifies my reading the Scriptures concerning the presence of Christ, if I have not a sense of it? I have been at many a meeting, but never had the sense of such a Divine presence as you talk of—nor it may be at the Sacrament neither. What is the reason thou hast no sense of it? If thou wilt take my counsel, and turn thy mind inward, and enquire whether the thing I speak of be true, whether there be such a

voice as I speak of, that will tell thee what thy state is; if thou wilt be true to *thyself*, thou mayest know the Divine presence, and thou mayest hear Christ speak.

The soul hath got eyes, and ears, as well as the body. What eyes doth the Apostle mean when he saith: *The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them?* If the soul hath eyes and ears, as well as the body, it can hear and see like the body: as the bodily eye can see visible things, so the eye of the soul can see things that are invisible, and heavenly. You can hear my voice outwardly, and you may hear the voice of Christ inwardly. I have known some that have been so afraid of hearing ill of themselves, that they would not enquire; some have been so guilty in their own consciences, that they have been afraid of hearing ill, that they would not enquire about themselves. So it is inwardly; some have been so conscious that their life and conversation is not what it ought to be—that their life is a sinful life, that they dare not bring it to the question. It

would certainly have been told them: Thy life is not a Christian life, thou must mend thy life, before ever thou comest to have peace with God. If this should be thy portion and mine, that upon search we should find our condition bad, what harm is it?

I would put one question to thee, be serious in considering of it:—We are all children of wrath by nature, none of us differ about that, and that *unless we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The question is, whether I am one of those or not? Suppose upon enquiry it be discovered to me that I am not, that is bad enough; this is hard, but not so hard as it is true: this is the thing which I would have you consider:—Am not I in a better case to know that I am in a natural state, than to go on and perish to eternity? As long as there is life, there is hope; as long as a man is upon the earth, and taking care for his soul, and enquiring about the state of his immortal soul, if his soul is not in a good condition, is it not better for him to know it, and to seek for a cure? For no greater infirmity and infelicity can is upon man, than to have some occult and hidden

disease, that he cannot be made sensible of; for this wastes and spoils him, and he cannot be persuaded to look out for a remedy: so it is inwardly, if a man be ignorant of his condition, and go on to his dying day and hour and does not seek after a remedy, this man perisheth without all peradventure.

When you are in this enquiry, be content to be controlled; be willing to have the truth spoken, though it be against yourselves. I might instance in divers things what I have spoken of. If a man be satisfied that his life is not a Christian life; I say, if the swearer or liar, if the proud person, or the effeminate, as soon as they come to be satisfied that their life is not a Christian life, that they now live, what can this man expect? What counsel should we give him, and what counsel should he take? I will go on in the way that I am in. What! after thou knowest thy life is not a Christian life? God forbid: wilt thou go on and perpetrate sin upon sin, and heap up wrath against the day of wrath? I am a sinner, my life is unchristian, I make account to live in sin, and die in sin. Is this good policy? Consider another text which our Lord spake:

If ye die in your sins, whither I go, ye cannot come.

O Friends! lay these things to your hearts. What have I to do but to tell you that the love I have in my soul for you all, makes me desire in my heart that you may be saved? *This is the will of God, that you might all be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth. Blessed are they that know the Truth, the Truth as it in Jesus.* Truth in the inward parts, hath a speaking voice; and if thou hearken to it, it will tell thee thy state is not what it ought to be. Canst thou believe the Truth when he tells thee so, that thy state is bad, and that thou art like to go to eternal destruction, unless there be repentance and regeneration to prevent it? Canst thou believe this doctrine, when it sounds in thy own heart? If thou canst not believe it, unbelief will be thy ruin.

The Spirit of Truth is come to convince the world of sin, because they believe not in Christ; He tells them their condition, and they will not believe Him. The Spirit of Christ convinceth men of sin, and they believe Him not. The Spirit of Truth convinceth thee of thy sin, but thou believest Him not.

Thou lovest thy pleasure and thy profit, and thine honour; then thou lovest not God with all thine heart, and then thou art not a Christian, but out of covenant with God. Art thou sensible that thy condition is bad; were it not best to get it mended? After we are convinced of our own sinful state, is it not our best course to seek to have it mended? Who shall mend it? saith one—I have done all I can to mend my life, and I cannot mend it.

I had concluded so in my younger years; I had fasted, and prayed, and spent time in hearing, reading, and meditation, and did all in my own power, and all to mend my state; but I could not mend it: and as I grew up in years, sin and corruption more prevailed, and there was no help; and I came so far as to believe there was no help, and that if God did not help me, I was undone to all eternity. I many times wished that I had never been born; I went to ministers and meetings, and to all sorts of separate people, and to all manner of ordinances, and to all manner of means, to mend this bad heart of mine, to see if I could obtain a power that would get me victory over my corruptions; but my arm was never so long as to

reach thereunto; it was far out of my power and reach.

Many have sought to get this power of reforming their hearts and lives, to attain it by their own hands, by their own endeavours, but they could never do it; they could never better their condition, nor bring forth fruit worthy of amendment of life. I wish that every one was come to that pass, that they knew not which way to turn them, that they were come at last to their wits' end; they will come to it sooner or later—the sooner the better. I have done all I can, I can do no more; I am at my wits' end, and I know not what to think concerning my eternal state, I know not what to judge of it; I strive against my lusts and corruptions, but, for all that, they prevail upon me; temptations come before me, but I cannot conquer them. O! I am glad when people are come to that pass, that they know not what to do, but despair of their own arms, of their own strength, and their own wit, and despair of all other help in the world: I am glad of that.

But I am not preaching up despair of God's grace and mercy; for let me tell you, when

men despair of their own doings, and of all outward means and helps, then they are fit objects for the mercy of God, and not till then: *When the Lord looked, and saw that there was none to save and deliver, then His own arm brought salvation.* God will not save until then; God will not reveal his power until men have done with their own power; they will never trust God, while they think they can do something for themselves. All the forms of religion, of the several people of this nation, will do them little good without the power.

What is the meaning of that principle, to have such masses, and prayers, and performances? What is the meaning of it? Let us search to the bottom. They say we are sinners, when we pray to God for his blessing, and for salvation by Christ; there is this at the bottom, they think these duties and performances will be very helpful to their state, helpful towards the knowledge of it; to speak plain English, these are their gods. If I speak of profane and wicked people, I would say their lusts are their gods; but when I speak of righteous people that are mere formalists, then I say their duties, as they call them, are

their gods: when they have done all, they can do nothing for them, and then they have no gods at all, then they are *godless;* and if God doth not help them, they are undone to all eternity.

When poor creatures are cast out, as it were, into the open field, to the loathing of their persons—*When I passed by thee, saith the Lord, and saw thee polluted in thy own blood, I said unto thee, live. When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.* What! was it a time of love when I was such an object in my own eyes, that I thought I was the most miserable creature in the world, one that could not make a good prayer, nor dispute for religion, nor perform any duty; a poor creature cast out into the open field, to the loathing of my person, having lost all that I had gained. My name was from among the living; my days were passed over in sorrow; and I said, There is nothing but darkness, and death, and misery for me. I used all means, and tried all things, saving

only a living trust in God, a trust in God alone, and that flesh and blood cannot do: flesh and blood cannot know Him, therefore flesh and blood cannot trust in Him. Alas! said I, I cannot trust in the Lord, I cannot cast my soul, and all my concernments, my fame and reputation in the world, I cannot cast all upon the care of the Almighty; I cannot know Him, nor trust in Him. How can I do it? Nobody can do it! *They that know my Name*, saith the Lord, *they will put their trust in Me:* never a truer word was spoken; but how they should know God, and trust in Him, says some one, I know not.

When thou comest once to this pass, to be at thy wits' end, and not know which way to turn thee, nor to whom to run for help, or to ask counsel for thy soul's welfare; when thou art come to the end of all, and without hope, then God reveals himself by his Son Jesus Christ. Christ the Son of God is known by our coming to Him; but none can come unto Christ, *except the Father which hath sent Him, draw him. When thou hast done with thy gods, and thrown away thy idols to the bats and moles*, then thou wilt find the Lord, and thou wilt cry out: O that God would

have mercy upon me, and lift up the light of his countenance upon me! I am a poor miserable creature!

There are many that make such a whining and complaining, that they take a pride in their very complaints, their hypocrisy is so great. I have known some that have prided themselves in wording their condition, and expressing their miserable case before the Lord: but suppose thou canst not speak at all, but feelest thyself miserable, thou canst not express thy condition; at such a time as this God was drawing thy soul to Christ Jesus, the Mediator of it. I have heard of a Mediator, and that there is *Balm* in *Gilead* for me, that there is a Physician there, that there is one Physician, even Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant. Thou hast sinned against Him, and grieved Him, yet He stands with open arms for thee, ready to receive thee, and embrace thee. Where stands He? He stands at the door and knocks; it is a small matter, one would think, to let Him in: (*Rev.* iii. 20.) *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me.* Here is good news for a

hungry soul, if any such be here. Christ the Mediator, stands at the door and knocks; He will come in and sup with thee, if thou openest to Him; then we shall meet with the Lord's Supper: *This is the Lord, I will wait for Him;* He will bring his bread with Him, the Bread of Life, and the Wine of his kingdom; and the Lord's Supper will be celebrated without cavilling and jangling.

Now because we will not pervert the Scripture, I would have you that understand books, read what *Commentators* of this and former ages say upon this text; whether they do not give it as their opinions, that this knocking at the door, is Christ calling the soul by his grace; and that this door is the door of the heart, where Christ is calling the soul by his grace and Spirit, to let Him in by faith. This is their judgment and sense, and their sense is mine, and I believe the genuine sense of this text; that Christ would have people think He is near to them, and would have them open their hearts, and receive Him by faith; for to be a Saviour to them.

No! that, saith flesh and blood, I cannot bear; I cannot consent to have Him for my

Saviour. I will not let Him in, for He is like *Micaiah* to *Ahab*, *He never spake good concerning me;* for, if I have Him for my Saviour, I must part with my lusts and pleasures: if there be any other Saviour, I will try, and not meddle with Him. He will spoil all our mirth and good society; He will tell me that of every idle word that I shall speak, I must give an account thereof in the day of judgment. What! do you think that I can like such a Saviour? that I can live with such an one as will call me to an account for every word I speak? and that, if I speak one idle word, judgment will come upon me? No, I will try one and another, rather than accept of Him upon such terms. I am one that am joined to such a church, and enjoy such and such ordinances, and such helps; I am in covenant with God, and under the seals of that covenant; I am baptized, and do partake of the Lord's Supper, which is another seal of the covenant: I hope it will go well with me.

I will go something farther. Another saith he must have a mediator: I will go to the *Virgin Mary*, and offer something to her, and pray to her. Saith another, I will go to

Saint *James*, and Saint *John*, and other Saints to intercede with God for me. They must have some mediator. This is the twisting and twining of the sons and daughters of men, to keep out Christ the Great Mediator, who came into the world for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Alas! I have nothing left but my bare life and living in this world; I have nothing left me but some *little desire I had to please God*; and that he will never judge and condemn me for. But my false dealing, and buying and selling [illegible]. He will judge this, and con- [illegible] and my discouraging of things [illegible]; and my carnal friendship of the [illegible] and my vain fashions; all this is cor- [illegible] and denied; these he came on purpose [illegible]: He came to destroy both the devil [illegible] works.

What! can a man live in the world and never join with the devil? never sin at all? never do any thing that the devil would have him to do? There is no perfection in this world; no living without sin here. Then I am sure there is no unity with Christ here; and if there be no unity with Christ, then there is none with God the Father. What will become

of thee now? What will all the pleaders for that opinion say now? There is something stands between God and me, and I shall never have peace. And what is that? It is sin. I would have my sin taken away, else I had better never have been born. Canst thou remove sin out of thy heart? I have tried, but I cannot do it; I have heard of Christ the *Mediator* of the New Covenant; He saith, He came into the world, and that for this purpose He was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Now sin in my heart is the devil's work, I will see if He will destroy that for me; I will trust and rely upon Him, and see if his great power can destroy it in me.

Here people come rightly to believe in Him that God hath sent, and to trust in Him; and He will take them in, and like a Surgeon He will open their hearts, and let out their corruptions, though there hath been never so much rottenness; and He will heal them, and purify them, and pardon them, though they have been never so wicked, if they come to Him. When thy sins are set in order before thee, then thou criest out: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Is it God that hath thought on me,

and waited to be gracious, and hath borne my sins long? How wonderful is his patience towards me! All these things working in the soul, tend to beget a love to God, and fervent desires after being cleansed and purified from sin, and earnest prayer to the Lord, to make the holy fire to kindle, that would burn it up. The more the soul trusteth in Christ, the more doth this heavenly fire burn up our lusts; and then a man feels a great change in his mind. The things, saith he, that I delighted in, are now grievous to me! I hope I shall never be found in those things again; my mind is now taken off them. Who took it off? Didst thou not strive before to take it off? I did, but I could not do it.

There are many, I believe, in this assembly before the Lord, that are my witnesses in this matter, that when they came to Christ the Mediator, He changed their minds, and He untied the devil's fetters. They were tied to their sins and lusts; but He hath unloosed them. They are ashamed of those things that they formerly took pleasure in. *What fruit*, saith the Apostle, *had you in those things, whereof you are now ashamed?* So I say, What pleasure have you in sporting, and gam-

ing, and drinking, and company-keeping? What pleasure have you to think on your wanton discourses? What pleasure in pride and vanity? What pleasure in wrath and bitterness of mind? And what pleasure in malice and envy? What pleasure have you in these things whereof you are now ashamed? So far as you are convinced, you are ashamed to think of them; I am ashamed to think that the devil at such a time, by such a temptation, should prevail over me.

I would to God you were all come to this, to be ashamed; that you might remember your past evil ways and actions, with sorrow and shame. There is a secret joy in this: surely it is better to be ashamed than to continue in impudence. God hath wrought this change at last; and who shall have the glory of it? God shall have the glory of it, for his own works will praise Him. What men do, many times they do for their own praise; but when they are at their wits' end, and know not what to do, they cast themselves upon their Maker, to see if He will have mercy upon them; if not, they must perish; then, for what He doth, He gets the glory and the praise.

There are some here, that are bound to praise God while they have a day to live, for what He hath done for them. They could never have loved God with all their hearts; but they would have continued strangers to God; and the devil would have led them captive at his will;—they would not have loved God with all their hearts, had not God first *Shed abroad his love upon their hearts*, and constrained them to love Him: it is He that hath first loved them, and *wrought in them both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure*. Whatsoever we are, we are by the grace of God; this grace is magnified in them that believe and obey the Gospel. My friends, we know there is so much peace and pleasure in the ways of God, so much soul-satisfaction in walking with God, and in loving Him with all our hearts, that I should be glad if every one of you were of the same mind, and had experience of it. We labour diligently for this purpose, and we would set before you these two things.

First, How we may come to know our miserable state by nature.

And, What a blessed and happy state they are in, that have been converted and changed;

that have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Consider your state by nature is evil; we hope that many of you believe the reports of the Gospel, concerning the goodness of the Lord, his great love in sending his Son into the world, to seek and to save you that were lost; and that you believe in Him. And we are persuaded, that by the foolishness of preaching God will save some of you, that you may be his redeemed ones, and trust to no other Saviour; *For there is not any name under heaven, but the Name of Jesus, by which you can be saved.* He only can take away the sins of the world; his Spirit, which he promised to send into the world when He was leaving it, searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins. Now I dare proclaim that Holy Spirit, to be the Spirit of the God of heaven, that now sees what resolution thou art of, and what thou art now proposing to do; whether to go on in sin, or to return to God. This I can speak without blasphemy; it is God's Spirit that searcheth the heart, and knoweth thy thoughts and purposes, and convinceth thee of thy sin. God hath sent his Son Christ

Jesus into the world to enlighten you, that by his light you may see Him, and that by his Grace you might receive Him, and that by his Grace you might be saved.

To Him I commit you all, and these words that we have spoken in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, according as He hath wrought in us.

FINIS.

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